


A HISTORY OF FRANCE

J. R. MORETON MACDONALD

F.M.



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John Ronald
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A HISTORY OF FRANCE

CHAPTER XIX

FRANCIS I AND THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE

(1514-1547)

DURING the reigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII we have been lingering on the threshold of the French Renaissance. The door is now flung open by the exuberant Francis, who strides nonchalantly into the new world on the other side.

It would be useless to attempt to decide when it was that France began to experience the first intimations of the Renaissance. It might be held that as early as the twelfth century Abelard had anticipated the teaching which was ultimately to prove fatal to Mediaevalism. To recall such anticipations of the Renaissance is but to reflect that no great movement in history takes effect without premature outbursts and premonitory symptoms. The spirit of change which brought in its train the Renaissance, the Reformation, the French Revolution and the social, religious, and political conditions under which we still live did not come suddenly into being in the fifteenth or sixteenth century; it had been at work already, sapping the foundations of Mediaevalism for hundreds of years. Abelard, Roger Bacon, Frederick II, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio were in a sense as much men of the Renaissance as the Medici, as Francis I, as Raphael, Leonardo, or Erasmus. Each had in fact laid his axe at the root of the mighty tree of Mediaevalism which was now creaking to its fall. But, however long its forces have been at work, there comes at last a time when every movement ceases to be subtle, subterranean, and suppressed,

but, endowed with a new and irresistible corporate energy, itself becomes the controlling force and sweeps men almost against their will, certainly without their deliberate co-operation, into its current.

It would be possible to argue that the active Renaissance began for France with the first crossing of the Alps by Charles VIII; and so in a sense it certainly did. Both that monarch and his successor had undoubtedly caught the new spirit which was rife in Italy, had been fascinated by the wealth, beauty, and restless intellectual energy which the Italian Renaissance had created in its home, and had dallied with this enchanter and had brought back to France books and pictures, and also the creators of books and pictures, and architects too, who should reproduce in France something of all this beauty of which Italy was the mother. But they had had no real part in the Renaissance; their position had been that of amateurs; France still stood outside the movement; sympathetic, admiring, but for all that outside. When we reach the reign of Francis I, himself to an extraordinary degree the living embodiment of the French Renaissance with all its faults and all its splendours, it is time to consider the significance of the Renaissance and the special characteristics which distinguish that movement in France. It is difficult in speaking of the Renaissance to restrict oneself to any one particular country. To paraphrase a famous saying, "Europe was its fatherland". But it would be outside the scope of this work to attempt even a sketch of the European aspects of the movement. This much, however, may be said, that the rediscovery of the ancient world, if by reasserting the possibility of beauty and joy it overthrew some of the prejudices which had beset the later Middle Ages, also sacrificed in so doing much of the naïve simplicity and the blind devotion which had adorned that period. The movement which made Shakespeare, Rabelais, and Henry IV possible, made Louis IX and Jeanne d'Arc impossible.

The Renaissance was a rediscovery; but one of such magnitude that at its best it had all the originality and the inspiration of a discovery. That this was the case in Italy it is

unnecessary to demonstrate. In France, however, it was different. There the movement was never really at home ; and the most sympathetic student will find it hard not to be driven to the conclusion that France has more in common with Mediaevalism than with modernity. This is not to deny that she threw herself with enthusiasm into the new movement. On the contrary—although it was not till thirty years after the accession of Francis I that the *esprit du moyen age* perished by the poison of imported Italian artificiality—France adopted the new learning, the new art, and the new attitude of mind with ardour, but with the ardour of the virtuoso rather than the devouring passion of inspiration. The French Renaissance, in fact, was imitative rather than creative. Here there is an entire lack of that ingenuous childhood of spirit which is the charm of the early Italian Renaissance. France, it may be said, attempted to seize the fruits of the movement without first serving the necessary apprenticeship, and with the inevitable result : artificiality, a heavy and degraded classicism, became her bane, and it is from this date that we trace that flippancy and superficiality which have dogged her footsteps until our own day and which are still to some extent her curse. In her attitude to the Renaissance France was untrue to her best self. And so it was that the French Renaissance carried in itself the germ of its own destruction.¹ It had sought in fact a royal road to a goal which in its fulness could only be reached by the most painful of journeys.

The King, who was in such a remarkable degree the embodiment of the Renaissance in France, traced his descent from that Duke of Orleans who was murdered in 1407. The eldest son of that Duke had been the father of Louis XII ; his younger son, John, Count of Angoulême, was the grandfather of Francis. Francis I was twenty years old at the moment of his accession. He had for some time realized that unless the unforeseen happened he must inherit the Crown, and his marriage to Louis XII's daughter Claude (1514) amounted to a tacit acknowledgment by his cousin of the probability. The

¹ The idea is borrowed from M. Brunetière.

marriage was not a happy one. "Avoit une femme fort facheuse," says the Heptameron (Nouvelle IV), "à laquelle les passetemps du mari ne plaisaient point." Francis' "pastimes" may well have been a trifle highly flavoured for the daughter of Anne of Brittany, who was a plump,¹ submissive person with a slight limp inherited from her mother. Francis treated her with little attempt at affection and devoted himself to his pastimes as if she had not existed. The young King was indeed wilful and passionate in no ordinary degree. He had been completely spoilt by his mother, Louise of Savoy, who made a perfect god of him, calling him "her king, her lord, her Cæsar, and her son,"² and indulging his every whim. With such an upbringing it is not surprising that Francis grew up an utterly self-indulgent man. What is more surprising is that his lax life did not interfere with his genuine family affections. To Louise he remained an attached son, and his letter to her after the Battle of Pavia is the letter of a disappointed child to a fond parent. His sister, Margaret of Angoulême, might well have won the affection of a worthier man than Francis. Throughout their lives Margaret and he remained more lovers than brother and sister, and his devotion to her is one of the most pleasing traits in the King's character.

It must ever be a matter of astonishment that the personal appearance of Francis should have won the universal applause of contemporaries. His portraits suggest a coarse, full-blooded man with a sensual mouth and a nose so long as to destroy the proportions of the face—a Henry VIII without his joviality. But to contemporaries he was a paragon of manly and kingly beauty. "Beau Prince," says the Loyal Serviteur,³ "autant qu'il y en eust point au monde." And the Italian, Marino Sanuto, in a more detailed portrait, maintains that the face though *non molto delicata* is beautiful; ⁴ the leg, however, a little

¹ "Bien petite et d'étrange corpulence," Gattianara to Margaret of Austria, Le Glay, "Négotiations diplomatiques" (1845), II. 53.

² Louise de Savoie, "Journal," op. cit. 390.

³ Op. cit. p. 369.

⁴ Marino Sanuto, "I Diarii" (1879-1901), XXI. 90-91; Barrillon, "Journal" (ed. Vaissière for Société de l'histoire de France, 1897-9), I. 110.

light in view of the monarch's great size. On the whole one is driven to the conclusion that sixteenth century taste was satisfied with size and a certain vigour and vitality combined with a dignified demeanour. Exuberant vitality, pliant adaptability, and a certain lavish recklessness gave the King—the "humane great monarch" of Browning's poem—a hold upon men which his character by no means justified.

From the moment of his accession it was clear that his rivalry with Charles V of Austria, the grandson of Maximilian, must be the great issue of his life. Not only was Charles his rival in Italy, but he would certainly revive the far more dangerous claim on the heritage of Charles the Bold; and the preservation of Burgundy was vital to the interests of France. Charles V also inherited from his great-grandfather, Charles the Bold, the Franco-Burgundian blood-feud which dated from the murder of the Duke of Orleans in 1407. Francis, however, was intent on Italy, and immediately opened negotiations with Charles. On 30 March, 1515, by the Treaty of Paris¹ it was arranged that the latter should marry Renée, the daughter of Louis XII, who should bring as her dowry Berry and a sum of 200,000 crowns. Ponthieu, Péronne, Amiens, Montdidier, and Abbeville were pledged as security for the execution of the treaty. A secret treaty with Venice² was completed in the same year.

"Durant toutes ces choses faisait le Roi de France secrètement preparer son voyage pour la conquête de sa duché de Milan,"³ which conquest, says Barrillon, he had "merveilleusement à cœur".⁴ The treaties with Charles and with Venice had been mere blinds to conceal his intentions; and in August, 1515, at the head of an army of 40,000 infantry and 25,000 lances, Francis effected the crossing of the Alps by the head waters of the Durance and the Stura, a very difficult route and one which had never before been used for such a purpose.⁵

¹ Barrillon, *op. cit.* i. 55 *sqq.*; cf. Treaties of Blois, 1504, *supra*, i. 357.

² *Ibid.* *op. cit.* i. 37, 38.

³ Loyal Serviteur, *op. cit.* 371.

⁴ Barrillon, *op. cit.* i. 62.

⁵ The road, which had to be cut for the transit of his horses and artillery, is now known as the Larche road. It is possible that this was the very pass which Hannibal used.

By this bold and unexpected move the Swiss who, estranged by France's repudiation of the Treaty of Dijon,¹ formed the chief strength of his opponents, and who were watching the passes of Mont Cenis and Mont Genève, were taken in rear. Prosper Colonna, who commanded in chief for the Holy League (which had been renewed in 1513 between Maximilian, Ferdinand, and Henry VIII), was surprised and taken prisoner by Bayard, and the Swiss fell back on Novara to cover Milan. At the same time negotiations were opened by Francis with the object of buying off these redoubtable mercenaries. The negotiations were on the point of being successful, and indeed a treaty had actually been signed though not ratified, when the arrival of a large reinforcement from Switzerland put a different complexion on affairs. This reinforcement had been brought up by the energy of the Cardinal of Syon and Galleazzo Visconti.² Francis meanwhile had advanced to Santa Brigida, about two miles from Marignano and ten from Milan, whence he sent the Constable to reconnoitre in the direction of that town. The latter returned hurriedly with the information that the Swiss were approaching, for he had seen a great cloud of dust in the direction of Milan. The Swiss had in fact been persuaded by the eloquence of the militant Cardinal, who had bid them not lose the "great laudable and fruitful victory" which awaited them; and the dust which rolled over the sun-scorched plain of Lombardy that Holy Cross Day (14 September, 1515) was raised by the rapid advance of their 32,000 men, marching light without armour, headcovering, or shoes, and with the rapidity of determination. "Vous assure qu'il n'est pas possible venir en plus grande fureur ne plus hardiment," said Francis after the battle in the boyish letter to his mother which is the most picturesque account of Marignano. In the rear on a Spanish jennet rode the Cardinal of Syon in full pontificals, with a cross before him to denote his status as Legate of Italy. The battle did not begin till four o'clock and was fiercely contested throughout the autumn evening. The French had been taken at least partially unawares and

¹ *Supra*, I. 363.

² Barrillon, "Journal," op. cit. I. III.

their artillery was in great danger. Night, however, closed down on an undecided field. In the obscurity caused by the darkness and the pall of smoke and dust, it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe, and French and Swiss lay down together. The King snatched some sleep lying fully armed on a gun carriage. At daybreak the battle recommenced. Francis rallied his men and gave heart to the defence. The French simply stood their ground while the attack wore itself out, and the timely arrival of a contingent of Venetians under Alviano, who had been marching at top speed to the assistance of the French, completed the disaster for the Swiss. They retreated in disorder on Milan leaving some 12,000 dead upon the field.

The first result of the victory was naturally the capitulation of Milan. Maximilian Sforza abandoned his dukedom and retired to France on a pension. Francis had secured the inheritance of his great-grandmother. With the Swiss, of whose courage and fighting qualities he had seen such a convincing display in the battle,¹ he immediately began to negotiate; he had no real quarrel with them and he greatly preferred to have them as friends. The negotiations were prolonged and entailed the payment of large sums of money. "Les Suisses," says Barrillon, "ne sont point honteux à demander ne soubz de dons et gratieusetez."² The Treaty of Geneva (7 December, 1515) was at length concluded, but five of the Cantons stood out from its terms, and it was not till 29 November, 1516, that the matter was finally adjusted by the Treaty of Fribourg, known as the *Paix Perpetuelle*, and afterwards supplemented in 1521 by the Treaty of Lucerne.

Meanwhile Francis had opened negotiations with the Pope. Leo X had been much agitated by the news of Marignano, which was of course a deadly blow to the Holy League, and, to conciliate the victor, he (at Viterbo, 13 to 15 October) promptly agreed to hand over Parma and Piacenza, if the King would help him to conquer the Duchy of Urbino for

¹ "Gens de grosse vindication et merueilleux courage, à la foy et fiance desquels ne fault faire grant fondement" (Barrillon, op. cit. II. 29).

² *Ibid.* I. 274.

his nephew, Lorenzo de' Medici. On 11 December Pope and King had a personal interview at Bologna.¹ The pontifical feet were nearly worn away (*fere obtriti*) with the osculations of the French courtiers, and the interview was in all respects brilliant and successful. But it had other objects besides ceremony and feasting. The whole question of the peculiar and exceptional position of the Gallican Church was under consideration. That position had been defined by the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438² by which the Gallican Church had to a great extent withdrawn itself from Papal authority. Against the Pragmatic Sanction, in obedience to the simple instinct of self-preservation, every Pope from the days of Pius II had waged incessant warfare, and the main obstacle they had met had not been the Crown but the Church itself, the *Parlements* and the University. The Crown indeed had not been unwilling to meet the Papacy; for if the Pragmatic Sanction was anti-papal it was also anti-monarchic. It set the Gallican Church on a pinnacle where it was to a great extent independent alike of papal and royal power. Thus it was that Louis XI in his last years had been willing to renounce the Pragmatic Sanction; and it was only when they were at war with the Papacy and were willing to use the most serviceable weapon that came to hand that the kings of France turned to it, not as a thing desirable in itself but as a lever against the Papacy. Louis XII, who had been continuously on bad terms with Rome, had taken the line laid down in the Pragmatic Sanction of appealing to Councils as superior to the Pope, and had even gone the length of summoning a Council to Pisa, and when Julius II failed to attend it he was actually denounced as contumacious. In reply Julius summoned the Lateran Council, which gave its approval to a Bull of 1516 abolishing the Pragmatic Sanction. It would not have been at all an easy matter to maintain that the Lateran Council had no authority, or that it went beyond its power in abolishing the Pragmatic Sanction.

¹ Barrillon, op. cit. i. 166 *sqq.*; Marino Sanuto, op. cit. I, xxi. 376; Le Glay, op. cit. ii. 85-90; Fleurance, op. cit. ch. LIII.

² *Supra*, i. 303.

It was only to be expected, therefore, that the whole question would be reopened at Bologna. King and Pope each had something to gain by the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction for it was a menace to the absolutism of each. What each required, however, could only be gained at the expense of the Gallican Church. Francis and Leo quickly agreed to substitute for the obnoxious Pragmatic Sanction a new agreement in the form of a *Concordat*, which would secure to each the privileges which each coveted.¹

Broadly speaking the Pope secured the abandonment by France of the objectionable tenet that Councils were superior to Popes. At the same time he reserved to himself certain considerable, if exceptional, powers in the matter of nomination to benefices; and, although nothing was definitely said in the *Concordat* about the restoration of the Papal annates (a year's revenue of vacant benefices), a clause which arranged for a true valuation of the annual revenue of every benefice indicated that that step was in contemplation. In return for these concessions the King received the privilege of nomination to the bulk of vacant benefices, a concession which was in reality not made at the Papal expense but at the expense of the Chapters which had hitherto enjoyed the privilege of electing their own superiors. If the *Concordat* was, as has been maintained, in any sense a triumph for Gallicanism it was for a new kind of Gallicanism, that of the King, no longer that of the Church.

Both Pope and King were delighted with the arrangement. Francis made an elaborate vindication of it for the *Parlement*; as for Leo, when he signed the agreement he declared enthusiastically: *Non solum placet, sed multum placet et perplacet*. But it was only to be expected that the *Concordat* should meet with heated opposition in France. Both the *Parlement* and the University protested but were obliged to accept it in the end, though it was not till 1527 that the King was able to put the

¹ Creighton, "History of the Papacy from the Great Schism to the Sack of Rome" (1897), v. 265.

Madelin, "Les premières applications du Concordat de 1516" in "Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome" (1897), Fasc. iv.-v.

measure into operation.¹ The establishment of the *Concordat* made the Crown as supreme in ecclesiastical as it already was in civil matters. But it had also a far-reaching and sinister effect, on which its promoters can hardly have calculated. In spirit though not in form, for there was no actual schism, it divided the Church of France, and especially the clergy, into two. From this time forward there is a royal or Concordatory clergy and a Gallican clergy. This fact goes far to explain the continual controversies within the Church, to which France was especially susceptible and which culminated in the fierce warfare between Jesuits and Jansenists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Francis now returned to France, leaving the Constable Bourbon as his Lieutenant-General in Italy. He reached Lyons on 24 February. There were matters of importance demanding his attention. Old Ferdinand, "Petticoat John" (Jean Guipon) the French called him,² had gone to his last account in the end of January (1516), and the Archduke Charles was now King of Aragon as well as of Castille. Charles desired breathing space to establish order in his new dominions, and was the more anxious to come to terms with France because Henry of England, who was married to another daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella (the unfortunate Catherine of Aragon), was inclined to lay claim to the Spanish inheritance. *Pourparlers* were therefore opened between the representatives of Charles and Francis. The result was the Treaty of Noyon (13 August),³ an attempt to bury the hatchet and establish the basis of a permanent understanding between France and Spain by the betrothal of Charles to Francis' baby daughter Louise. The French claim on Naples was to be the dowry of this princess, and in return Charles undertook to abandon his claim on Burgundy. The Treaty of Noyon, if adhered to, might have settled the rivalry between Charles and Francis on rational and national lines; its abandonment was a great misfortune.

¹ Barrillon, op. cit. II. 5 *sqq.*

² Brantôme, I, ch. VII.

³ "Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous François I" (ed. Société de l'histoire de France, 1854), p. 42, and Mignet, "Rivalité de François I et de Charles-Quint" (1875), I. 112-113.

Francis was now, it seemed, intent on peace. The peace with the Pope, the peace with the Swiss, and the Treaty of Noyon were followed by an attempt at an arrangement with the Emperor himself. Maximilian had invaded Italy,¹ at the very moment when Francis had left it, aided by a contingent from the Swiss Cantons which had stood out from the treaty with France; and the Constable had retired before him to Milan. But Maximilian was short of money and his mercenaries demanded cash; moreover, he had no siege train. Disturbed by rumours cunningly disseminated of a plot against his life, he raised the siege of Milan and made all speed home after one of the most feeble campaigns ever attempted.² Maximilian was therefore not unwilling to treat with Francis and in March, 1517, was signed the Treaty of Cambrai, by which the Emperor and the Kings of France and Spain mutually guaranteed one another's dominions and agreed to raise an army against the Turks. The Treaty of London, between France and England, rounded off this cycle of treaties, and for the moment profound peace fell upon Europe.³

For two years the peace continued unbroken, only disturbed by continued talk of a crusade against the Turk.⁴ There was, however, considerable jealousy between Francis and Charles, each of whom desired the title of King of the Romans; and each of whom would on the death of Maximilian desire the imperial crown. Francis was in fact intent on securing this dignity for himself and to this end despatched ambassadors to win over the various electors.⁵ They poured money into the

¹ Barrillon, op. cit. i. 198 *sqq.*; Fleurange, op. cit. LV.

² "Tout cela fait, l'Empereur marcha tout droit à Milan, et toute son armée et artillerie, pensant que ceulx dedans se deussent estonner. Et quand il feust près des portes donna deux coups de canon, et puis s'en retourna sans aultre chose faire en assez mauvais ordre" (Fleurange, op. cit. p. 313).

³ "Après que le Roy eut fait traicté de paix . . . ce royaume de France estoit en grand paix et tranquillité et n'y avoit pour lors aucun bruyct ou rumeur de guerre, division ou partialité" (Barrillon, op. cit. i. 273).

⁴ "Journal d'un Bourgeois," op. cit. p. 48; Barrillon, op. cit. i. 248.

⁵ Queen Louise with her customary *naïveté* made the following note in her Journal: "Pleut à Dieu que l'Empire eut plus longtemps vacqué ou

pockets of the most likely of these, but on the death of Maximilian in January, 1519, in spite of all his endeavours, his rival was elected (28 June, 1519); *dont le roy de France fut très mal content parce qu'il avoit fort brigué pour l'estre*.¹ Francis attempted to conceal his chagrin by plunging himself into a whirl of gaiety and sport at Fontainebleau. But the accession of Charles to the imperial crown gave a fresh edge to the rivalry of the two monarchs which had been temporarily blunted by the Treaty of Noyon. From this time until the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis it was, with one brief interval, war to the knife between France and the Empire, to decide which should have the predominance in Europe.

A comparison of the respective advantages of the rivals shows us that, while Charles had the advantage of the high dignity to which he had just been elected, and while he quite overshadowed his opponent in the vast extent of his dominions, yet his advantage was more apparent than real. Germany, hetero-homogeneous and beginning to be torn by religious strife, was hardly a source of strength; and, indeed, while we call him sometimes the Emperor and sometimes "Charles of Austria," it was not as Emperor nor as German prince that he confronted Francis I, but in his capacity of King of Spain. Thus the rivalry is between France and Spain, the latter half-helped, half-hampered, by her imperial and German connection. A moment's thought will convince us that Francis had considerable advantages in his contest with the Spanish Colossus. Strategically he had the inner lines; politically, the organized despotism which, thanks to Louis XI, constituted the French Government. His kingdom, in fact, was completely under control. Whether it were Church, Army, or Finance, he could mould each according to his will. Above all his financial position was sound; his prosperous and well-organized kingdom would always—with occasional grumbles—provide

bien que pour jamais on l'eut laissé entre les mains de Jesus Christ, auquel il appartient et non à aultre!" (Journal, op. cit. 401)—and this after her own son had been straining every nerve to secure the prize.

¹ "Journal d'un Bourgeois," op. cit. p. 80.

him with the sinews of war.¹ For a time Charles seemed to have the advantage in the matter of allies. Until 1525 the Italian princes were on the whole favourable to him, a fact which, as the war was in the main fought out in Italy, was of considerable importance. When after 1529 the Italian princes came over to the side of France, and when at about the same time the latter also began to receive support from the Turks and from the Protestants of Germany, the difference was considerable.

At first it seemed that Charles wanted to avoid hostilities. His accession was a stormy one. His cruel treatment of his Spanish mother and the introduction into Spain of Flemish Councillors—for Charles was a Low-Countryman at heart—provoked the Spaniards to revolt. The Battle of Villalar, however, in which Charles was victorious over the *Comuneros*, put an end to this danger (24 April, 1521).

In the impending struggle it was clear that the attitude of Henry VIII of England would be an important consideration. Both the principals, therefore, approached him in the hope of securing his co-operation. Wolsey, then at the height of his power, seems to have gauged sagaciously the differences in character of Francis and Charles. Contrast the splendid and ceremonious meeting of the kings of France and England—ever afterwards known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold—with the quiet and businesslike interview between Charles and Henry, which took place at "Cantorbery" ten days before. For all its results the celebrated three weeks of junketing and jousting (27 May, 1520) between Guines and Ardres, might just as well never have been held. When Henry bade Francis farewell it was only to proceed to Gravelines, where a few days later he entered into an agreement with the Emperor that for two years he would enter into no marriage treaty to the detriment of the Empire (14 July, 1520).

All eyes were now once more turned on Italy. For it was clear that the first round of the great contest would be

¹ "Je ne crains pas l'Empereur parcequ'il n'a pas d'argent," Francis said; and this is the best explanation of the strength of France in her struggle with the Empire.

fought there. Francis I ruled in Milan and Genoa, and in both places his rule was highly unpopular. The whole Peninsula was in fact seething with discontent. In particular there was a growing feeling of nationality, increased by the resentment against foreign armies and foreign Governors. Francis, however, thought that he might secure the co-operation of the Pope, and in 1520 a treaty was arranged with that shifty potentate,¹ in which he agreed to withhold his confirmation of Charles' election to the Empire and to assist Francis' son Henry to the throne of Naples. But Leo was unstable as water, and the ink was hardly dry upon this treaty when Charles received from him the white *Haquenée* which was the symbol of the investiture of Naples.² Hostilities had meanwhile broken out in the Pyrenean region and a French army invaded Navarre. Pampeluna was taken by the French and retaken by the Spaniards, after which Navarre relapsed into Spanish hands. In Northern Italy, too, matters were going ill, and Francis felt his hard-won possession of the Milanese slipping from his grasp. In the autumn of 1521 there was an attempt at mediation on the part of Henry VIII at Calais,³ where vigorous Latin manifestos were read in support of either party. But nothing came of the conferences, which were broken off on 22 November. Two days later Henry VIII, Charles V, and Leo X entered into an offensive alliance against France. Leo's death in the same year (1 December, 1521) was a set-back to the allies, but in spite of this the Italian Campaign of the following spring was disastrous to France. Lautrec, who commanded in Italy, suffered a severe reverse at Bicoque (29 August, 1522) and before the end of the year the Milanese, with the exception of Cremona and Novara, was once more lost to France.

It was at this critical juncture that a quarrel which had been long threatening between the Crown and the most important of the apanaged princes came to a head. Charles of Montpensier, Duke of Bourbon and Constable of France, had by his marriage to Suzanne, daughter of Anne of Beaujeu and

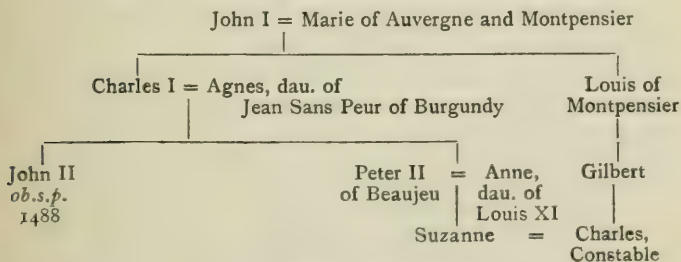
¹ Barrillon, op. cit. II. 176.

² *Ibid.* II. 187.

³ *Ibid.* II. 191 sqq., and esp. 206-7.

heiress of the elder branch of the house of Bourbon, of which the Montpensiers were the cadets, reunited the whole of the great apanage of Bourbon.¹ Thrice a Duke and six times a Count, the whole of Central France belonged to him and his revenues were immense. In precedence he was second only to the King's brother-in-law, while as Constable he commanded the military forces of the kingdom. Suzanne died childless, and on her death the bulk of her lands should have reverted to the Crown. Bourbon would have been reduced once more to the Montpensier heritage. As long, however, as Anne of Beaujeu, the Constable's, mother-in-law, lived, Francis refrained from touching the Bourbon possessions. On her death he anticipated the decision of the *Parlement*, which was then trying the case, by sequestrating a large portion of the apanage. Even before this Bourbon, who doubtless guessed what was going to happen, had entered into relations with Charles V (1519), and these relations grew more and more treasonable, until in 1523 he entered into a definite understanding with the Emperor and the King of England to betray his country. Francis should have struck at once, but he temporized, went to Moulins, and had an interview with Bourbon, so allowing him to slip through his fingers. In 1524 criminal proceedings were taken against the traitor, who had escaped from France and was by this time (1524) in arms against his lawful sovereign. He was condemned in his absence, and was only re-instated in his domains by the Treaty of Madrid:² but he

¹ THE HOUSE OF BOURBON-MONTPENSIER



² *Infra*, p. 19.

never returned to France. There is no doubt that Francis behaved at first with great rashness and then with great weakness in this matter. Richelieu, who understood how to deal with traitors, strongly condemns the King's action in his memoirs, and adds that but for his weakness at the time of the meeting of Moulins he would not have been captured at Pavia.

The year 1523 saw a double invasion of France; the Emperor threatened Bordeaux and Bayonne from Pampeluna, and the English advanced into Picardy from Calais.¹ Paris was in considerable alarm and the faubourgs were fortified, while every day saw processions, intercessions, and sermons. But in November the English quite suddenly departed. Francis made the mistake of not closing with the enemy in the north and south-west. Hypnotized by Italy, he kept the flower of his army in that country. Here he was confronted by the rebel Bourbon, who drove the French from the Milanese and invaded Provence.² It was in this campaign that the great Bayard lost his life (28 April, 1524). Bourbon threatened Marseilles, but his soldiers refused to attack and he had to retreat on Nice. Francis now himself entered the arena.³ During the Duke of Bourbon's siege of Marseilles he had lain behind the line of the Durance, and now, instead of closing with his retreating enemy, he prepared for an invasion of Italy. Acting with confidence and vigour, he flung his powerful army, 30,000 strong, across the Alps in October, 1524, and swooped down on Milan with such rapidity⁴ that his enemy had only just time to evacuate the city. The castle of Milan, however, remained in imperial hands. In spite of this, Francis should have pressed home his attack to Lodi, the imperialist headquarters, before the enemy had time to recover from their surprise. But he swerved off southwards to attempt the capture of Pavia which was held by Antonio di Leiva with some 6000 men. He appeared before the city on 28 October,

¹ Du Bellay, "Ambassades en Angleterre" (1905), 166-181.

² "Journal d'un Bourgeois," *op. cit.* 211.

³ *Ibid.* 217-8.

⁴ The march into Lombardy only took eleven days and was a fine feat.

but found himself unable to take it by storm. With an inactivity which sheds an unfavourable light upon his generalship, he then took up a position in front of the city and awaited events. Events as he might have anticipated took a threatening turn. The imperialists gathered a powerful army at Lodi. But Francis never seems to have appreciated the formidable nature of their concentration. If he had he would hardly have despatched a considerable body of troops on a fool's errand to Naples.¹ By the beginning of the year 1525 Bourbon, Lannoy, and Peschiera were at the head of an army of 24,000 men and on 24 January they advanced to the relief of Pavia.² Francis entrenched himself in a park outside the city, his front defended by a tributary of the Ticino, and his flank by the strong walls of the park. For a fortnight the armies glared at one another across the little river. The besiegers were in turn besieged, and the imperialists were able to harass the French by constant skirmishes. Francis never realized that they meant business even now when he must have been aware of their numerical superiority. On 23 February a Council of War of the imperial generals decided on an attack. By clever tactics the French position was turned, the imperial artillery made breaches in the park wall, and in the early hours of the 24th a night advance brought the imperial army on to the flank of the French. Francis was too slow or too stupid to attack them while they were still in column, and yet rash enough to leave his entrenchments and attack them after they had effected their deployment. The details of the actual fighting are confused. The best explanation is that the French completely lost their heads—night attacks are notoriously ruinous to nerves. Francis charged with courage but without intelligence. Not once during the day were the French able

¹ But cf. Champollion-Figeac, "Captivité du Roy François I," who holds that the justification for the expedition to Naples was the necessity for keeping the support of the Pope and the Florentines (Intro. x).

² For the Battle of Pavia: Champollion-Figeac, *op. cit.*; Gachard, M., "La Captivité de François I et le traité de Madrid" (1860); "Journal d'un Bourgeois," *op. cit.* pp. 468 and 469.

to make a concerted attack and the battle resolved itself into a series of individual exploits. The Swiss behaved ill and the Duke of Alençon left the field, to die a few months afterwards of chagrin. It was soon a case of every man for himself. A sortie by the garrison completed the discomfiture of the French. They were completely surrounded and the Spaniards were disinclined for prisoners. Six thousand dead were left on the field including the flower of the French army. Francis himself was in grave danger when Lannoy came up, and to him the King surrendered.¹ For the third time in history a French king was a captive in the hands of his enemies. The same evening the King indited his celebrated letter to his mother² in which occurs the well-known phrase: "*de toutes mes choses ne m'est demeuré que l'honneur et la vie qui est sauve*". And it continues, "*j'ay espérance que Dieu ne me abandonnera pas, vous recommandant vos petits enfants et les miens*". With these egotistical words Francis resigned himself to his position. In May he was taken at his own request to Spain where he was imprisoned at Madrid.

France was convulsed by the catastrophe of Pavia. The Bourgeois of Paris gives us in his "Journal" (one of the most important authorities we possess for the reign of Francis) a striking description of the effect of the news in Paris. The inhabitants were *très fort esmeux*; the gates of the city were shut and guarded; the crier went round to declare that no person should play any game on Sundays and feast days until after service. Louise of Savoy, capable and devoted, took up the government. Her rule was marked by severity, no doubt provoked by the exigencies of the moment. Her Journal begins to abound with accounts of the execution of Lutherans and of State as well as of religious prisoners. Of the important religious developments mention will be made later.

The Regent's task was no doubt a difficult one; still no one wanted Charles to be supreme in Europe; in fact the

¹ The sword surrendered by Francis at Pavia was taken by Murat from Madrid, and is now in the Musée d'Artillerie at Paris.

² "Journal d'un Bourgeois," *op. cit.* 237.

sense of the necessity for a "Balance of Power" was beginning to make itself felt. Least of all did Henry VIII, who was tiring of his Spanish wife and consequently drawing away from the Emperor, want to see that monarch humiliate France. He was therefore easily bribed by the Regent into an alliance with France (11 August, 1525).

Meanwhile the royal captive was faring but ill in the High Tower of the Castle of Madrid. The astute Emperor knew exactly how to put the screw on. The close confinement, and the contempt with which he was treated by his royal captor, who simply ignored his existence, preyed upon Francis' health. Twice at least during his captivity persistent rumours reached Paris of his serious illness and once of his death,¹ and he did, in fact, fall very ill indeed. So ill that the Emperor, who would have been the loser by his death, was obliged at last to take some notice of him; and that his devoted sister Margaret set off for Madrid² to minister to him and to see what she could do to secure an accommodation with the Emperor. Francis, ever susceptible to family ties, and genuinely attached to Margaret, responded to treatment and recovered. Margaret's negotiations with the Emperor were less successful. But the opinion of Europe was against Charles, and there was a universal outcry, in which the voice of Erasmus joined, for the release of the unfortunate captive, who indeed was ready enough to offer terms, though whether he was ready to observe them was another matter. At last very reluctantly the Emperor agreed to the Treaty of Madrid (14 January, 1526) by which Francis abandoned all his Italian claims and restored to the Emperor Burgundy and its dependencies, a most important concession which gave away by a stroke of the pen the greater part of the acquisitions of Louis XI; abandoned also the suzerainty of Artois and Flanders and gave up the much disputed Tournai; undertook, moreover, to reinstate the rebel Bourbon; to abandon his allies; to marry Charles' sister Eleanor (Queen Claude had died in 1524), and

¹ "Journal d'un Bourgeois," *op. cit.* 262. Francis was seriously ill in September, 1525; cp. Champollion-Figeac, *op. cit.*, *Intro.* lvi.

² *Ibid.* *op. cit.* 258.

to hand over as hostages his two children, the Dauphin and the little Duke of Orleans.¹

It is quite clear that Francis had not, when he agreed to it, the slightest intention of carrying out this humiliating treaty; indeed he avowed as much to his friends. But his manner of publicly disavowing it was almost unnecessarily cynical. He had undertaken to ratify it at the first French town which he reached. This was Bayonne, and here he received a deputation of Burgundians protesting against the abandonment of the Duchy. Unmindful of the perilous position in which the step would place his two sons, with whom he had light-heartedly exchanged boats as he crossed the frontier, Francis ran his pen through the clause which had abandoned Burgundy, and sent the Spanish representatives back with a mutilated treaty. Of this cynical deceit there can be no palliation; but neither can there be any doubt that all Europe protested against the Treaty of Madrid and approved of its disavowal (March, 1526). By the end of May Francis had formed a league with the Pope, Venice, and other Italian princes, the object of which was to thwart the execution of the other important clause of the treaty, i.e. the consolidation of Italy under imperial rule. The League of Cognac² (22 May, 1526) was a fresh proof that Europe was opposed to the unlimited aggrandizement of the Empire. It was probably predilection rather than policy that kept Francis from actively supporting the league which he had joined. Pavia had given him a temporary distaste for battle; confinement, and the stuffiness of the "high tower" at Madrid, a renewed zest for pleasure and the open air. There were other calls too on the pleasure-loving monarch. At any rate Madame d'Étampes, the favourite mistress of his maturer years, had come with the Regent to Bayonne to hear something of the prospective new Queen, who was almost the only solid result of the treaty and one of which Francis took little serious account. Be this as it may, neither Francis nor Henry VIII took any share in the hostilities in Italy which ensued in 1526 and 1527. The self-

¹ "Journal d'un Bourgeois," *op. cit.* 274.

² *Ibid.* *op. cit.* 283.

seeking Medici Pope, Clement VII, had committed himself for the only time in his life and was to suffer for it. Bourbon invaded Italy in the name of the Empire and swept all before him. Rome was stormed in May, 1527, Bourbon being killed in the escalade. The city was ruthlessly pillaged with circumstances of horrible cruelty and sacrilege. The fall of Rome made the Emperor master of Italy. In the midst of his building operations at Fontainebleau Francis found time to be *fort courroucé* at the success of Spanish arms in Italy. He hoped to counteract it by the completion of an alliance with England. After Easter, 1527, English ambassadors visited Paris, and in August of the same year a treaty with England was signed at Amiens. The advance in the absolutism of the French monarchy may be estimated by the fact that on this occasion it was not the States General but an Assembly of "Notables" that was summoned (15 December, 1527) to approve of the proposed hostilities.

In the summer of 1527 war was declared; Lautrec advanced into Italy, recovered Milan and Genoa with comparative ease, and before the end of April, 1528, was knocking at the gates of Naples. It was only the defection of the Genoese Admiral, Doria, who had demanded certain concessions for his native city, including ancient rights over Savona, that saved Naples for the Emperor.¹ As Wolsey said: "Better have given six Savonas than offended one Doria". The tide turned with astonishing rapidity and completeness. The French troops before Naples were decimated by disease and Lautrec himself perished. The campaign which had commenced so brilliantly ended in the capitulation of the remnant of the French army. The extreme folly of the cavalier treatment of Doria was further demonstrated when the slighted Admiral returned to Genoa, headed a rebellion against the French Government, and re-established a republic which endured until the French Revolution. Genoa was lost by Francis I's overbearing folly and by no other cause.

Charles V had proved his superiority over his rival, but the growth of Lutheranism in Germany and the menacing attitude

¹ "Journal d'un Bourgeois," op. cit. 366.

of the Turks went far to discount his triumph. Francis was saved from humiliation not by his own prowess but by the embarrassments of the Emperor. In August was signed the Peace of Cambrai, known as the *Paix des Dames* because it was negotiated between Louise of Savoy and Margaret of Austria. By this treaty Charles, broadly speaking, accepted the modifications of the Treaty of Madrid suggested by his unprincipled rival. He gave up the claim on Burgundy, the most intolerable item in that treaty, for a sum of 2,000,000 crowns, on payment of the first instalment of which he agreed to set at liberty the two unfortunate princes who were still in close confinement in Madrid. In other respects the Treaty of Cambrai was founded on that of Madrid. Francis abandoned Italy, which did not much matter; and Flanders and Artois, together with Hesdin, Lille, Douai, Orchies, Tournai, and Saint-Amand, which mattered a great deal. The County of Charolais was given to the Emperor for life. Bourbon being now dead, it was easy to agree to the reinstatement of his heirs. The marriage with Eleanor was confirmed, and the allies of France were heartlessly and specifically thrown to the lions; Francis even engaged himself to assist the Emperor with men and money in the invasion of Italy.

The Treaty of Cambrai brought Charles V to the height of his fortunes. True it was a relapse from the Treaty of Madrid, but it had the supreme advantage that it was executable. Charles, though naturally suspicious of the good faith of Francis, at once set to work to establish himself in Italy, made terms with Francesco Sforza, leaving him in possession of Milan as a kind of tributary Prince, also with Venice and Ferrara, and, after some trouble, with Florence, where, as a sop to the Pope, he established Alessandro de' Medici. After this he was at length able to assume the imperial crown at Bologna (24 February, 1530).

Francis meanwhile was experiencing great difficulty in raising the money for the ransom, and a *grosse taille* was levied on all the towns in the kingdom. At last in July, 1530, the money was paid over and the royal children were released; a general holiday was declared in Paris, and amidst *feus de joie*

and *Te Deums* the Parisians tried to forget their lost 150,000 *livres*.¹ As for the King he was quite overcome with his skin-deep emotions. He rode nearly to Bordeaux, and when he met his children "les baisa et fut long temps après qu'il les embrassoit sans parler d'aise qu'il avait".² With the children came a less welcome addition to the royal ménage in the shape of "Madame Eleonor," the long-talked-of bride. She appeared in a great chariot covered with embroidery in the antique style, richly accompanied by *dames et dameiselles* of her own country, dressed *à l'espagnolle*:³ Francis of course loathed the merest suggestion of Spain. However, he put a good face on it, "luy fist la reverence et elle pareillement à luy en grand honneur et joye," and on 7 July, 1530, the wedding was celebrated (at the astounding hour of 2 a.m.) quite quietly in a convent. And, says the chronicler, the King "se trouva bien avec le diete dame," so much so that he did not abandon her until the day of the entry into Bordeaux: after which unwonted display of conjugal fidelity he no doubt returned to the more congenial company of Madame d'Étampes. Considering the fiasco of the campaign in Italy and his own extraordinary and culpable inertia, Francis had not come badly out of the last round of the struggle. He had not, however, himself to thank, but rather the embarrassments which beset his rival, and the reluctance of Europe to allow the Emperor to become all-powerful. Francis could always calculate that Europe would return to him, however fast and however loose he might play, rather than submit to the supremacy of Charles V. As a counterpoise to that potentate he was indispensable.

For a period of six years (1529-1535) peace prevailed between France and the Empire. The two rivals watched one another suspiciously and made no move. Whether this peace was a matter of accident, convenience, or policy, it was just

¹ "Journal d'un Bourgeois," op. cit. 413: "Il y avoit devant le hostel de la ville un beau grand feu et par toute la ville y avoit force feux et tables dressées à boire et manger et s'efforçoit un chacun de faire grande joye".

² *Ibid.* 414.

³ *Ibid.* 415.

what France required ; an interval in which to recuperate from the enormous drain on her resources, financial and otherwise, which had been imposed on her by the long and fierce struggle between Francis and Charles V. The Peace of Cambrai was about the last political act of its two fair authors. Neither Margaret of Austria nor Louise of Savoy long survived it. The death of Louise in 1531 was an event of considerable importance ; for both as Regent and as her son's trusted councillor she had exercised great influence on the policy of France during the entire reign. The King now fell under the sway of Montmorency, who had had a large share in the negotiation of the Treaty of Cambrai. He, more than any other, was responsible for the pacific attitude adopted by France during the years 1530-5. While Charles was attempting to consolidate his power in Italy, Francis was establishing relations with all Charles' enemies in Italy and elsewhere. Most important of these were perhaps the Lutherans of Germany, and very delicate was the game which Francis had to play with them. If he was to keep on terms with the Pope, he must make some show of repressing the growing Protestant movement, whereas if he overdid the persecuting rôle he would lose the powerful support which he enjoyed in the very camp of his rival. No wonder, therefore, that Francis' attitude towards the Reform Movement seems capricious. But this matter of the Reformation must be treated in another chapter. With England Francis continued to negotiate, and in 1522 he had another interview with Henry VIII. Henry, however, was now hastening towards a breach with the Papacy, and when he finally broke with the Pope a coldness sprang up between him and Francis. In Italy Charles' position seemed unassailable. Of all the Italian powers Venice alone was uncommitted to him. But the Pope might be persuaded to form another League. With this idea in his mind, Francis had an interview with Clement VII at Marseilles (October, 1533), the main result of which was the betrothal of the King's second son, Henry (afterwards Henry II), to Clement's niece, Catherine de' Medici. On the whole, however, the interview did more harm than good. It completed the estrangement of England

and it alienated the German Protestants; and the half-hearted and insincere support of the Pope was a poor set-off for these very definite losses. Moreover, sincere or insincere, Clement died in the following year, and things were once more in the melting-pot. It was now that Francis decided to make open advances to another of Charles' enemies with whom he had long been dallying. Indeed the Emperor, surrounded as he was with enemies, had none more dangerous than the Turk: and it was with the infidel that the "Most Catholic King" now decided to establish relations. In view of the shock which such an unholy alliance must assuredly give to the feelings of Christendom, it was arranged that the agreement with the Turks should be ostensibly commercial, and it was only a secret clause which indicated that the alliance would be regarded as political and military also. Notwithstanding this precaution the Franco-Turkish Alliance united Germany in her resistance to France, and sacrificed to a great extent the advantage which the latter enjoyed through the religious divisions in the ranks of her opponents. Nevertheless it was an event of lasting importance, and had an effect on the diplomacy and politics of France which endured long after its originators were forgotten.

But for the understanding with the Turks, France would now have been in a position of almost complete isolation, and it was clear that she would soon have to prepare for another round in her struggle with the Empire. The King and his advisers had had the wisdom to take the one step essential as a preliminary to all successful warfare; they had placed the army on a satisfactory footing. The earlier Italian campaigns had conclusively proved the supreme importance of infantry in the new conditions of warfare. The Spanish and French infantry, especially the former, had won themselves a considerable name, but that of the Swiss had been somewhat tarnished by its failure at Marignano and Bicocca as well as by its treachery at Pavia. Francis' advisers had come to the wise conclusion that it was a bad thing to rely entirely on mercenaries. They therefore set to work to organize a national infantry on territorial lines—a return to the policy of Charles VII. In 1534 an *ordonnance* was passed for the levy of a legion

of foot soldiers in every province. Good pay was given and privileges to those who enlisted. The results were excellent, for not only did the common people enlist freely—to their own great advantage—but many men of noble birth, finding the career of knighthood closed to them, elected to forget their pride and accept the new conditions. The ranks of the new army were open to all; it was *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, and Francis I is the father of the modern soldier. While he retained a considerable number of mercenaries alongside the new legions Francis also retained the old organization of the *ban* and *arrière-ban*.¹ At the opening of hostilities in 1536 he thus had at his disposal some 100,000 men.

The death, in October, 1535, of Francesco Sforza was the signal for the outbreak of hostilities. A few months later Europe was ablaze. French troops overran Savoy and Piedmont in February, 1536, and by June there were hostilities in Picardy and on the Spanish Frontier as well. The French armies were rolled out of Piedmont and the Emperor proceeded to invade Provence. Montmorency, however, wasted the country in front of him, with the result that after a fruitless campaign the Emperor was obliged to withdraw, but not before half of his army had perished by pestilence. An attempt to effect a junction with the imperial and Spanish forces had been frustrated by the resistance of the city of Narbonne. In Picardy also the French managed to hold their own, and Péronne held out against all attacks. Piedmont was recovered in 1537, and then the intervention of the Pope brought a truce. There was an attempt to arrange an interview at Nice which fell through, but Francis and Charles met a few days later at Aigues-Mortes and agreed to a cessation of hostilities. His understanding with the Emperor naturally brought Francis into bad odour with his allies who thought themselves deserted. Especially was this the case with the German Protestants who had put themselves in the position of rebellious subjects and were likely to meet the punishment of such. Francis now assiduously cultivated his rival, and Charles visited France in 1539. But the causes of enmity

¹ *Supra*, i. 256, note, and 305.

lay too deep for any permanent understanding. By 1542 hostilities were resumed, and once more France was isolated in Europe. Francis directed his main attack on the Pyrenean frontier where he laid siege to Perpignan, but was repulsed. Hostilities in the Netherlands were even less decisive, and indeed, since the experience of Pavia, the French had been reluctant to give battle on the open field. The Count of Enghien, however, who had invaded Italy, was anxious to try issues with del Guasto, the Spanish general to whom he was opposed. Having obtained the sanction of the King, he flung his army on his opponent at Ceresole (14 April, 1544) and completely routed him. Ceresole, however brilliant, was but a barren victory. The main issue was to be fought out elsewhere. Charles was now in close relations with Henry of England, and a joint invasion of France was being planned. By September, 1544, the Emperor was within thirty leagues of Paris. But the danger was not so great as it seemed. The imperial exchequer was empty and the imperial army insubordinate. Most important of all, the imperial ally was untrustworthy, and was too busy blockading Boulogne to co-operate effectively with Charles. The Emperor, therefore, decided to make the best terms he could with Francis. The result was the Peace of Cr py (18 September, 1544), by which it was agreed that the Duke of Orleans, Francis' second surviving son (the eldest having died in 1526) should marry either the Emperor's daughter Marie or a daughter of his brother Ferdinand; that Francis should grant the Prince a large apanage in France, and that Marie's dowry (if it were Marie) should be the Low Countries and Franche Comt , and Ferdinand's daughter's dowry (if it were Ferdinand's daughter) should be Milan. Francis could now turn his attention to England, but his attempt at an invasion of that country was even less successful than the English attempt at the invasion of France. A French fleet, it is true, entered the Solent and did some damage in the Isle of Wight, but the result was insignificant. In June, 1546, therefore, Francis made with England the Treaty of Ardres. Boulogne, which the English had taken, was to be restored, but only on the payment by France of the immense sum of 2,000,000 crowns.

Francis was only fifty-three years of age but self-indulgence had prematurely aged him, and in his closing years he betrayed all the characteristics of a worn-out voluptuary. Having lost his superficial attractions and his capacity for enjoyment, all the worse side of his nature began to come out. His unscrupulousness was demonstrated by his deliberate treachery in the matter of the Treaty of Madrid, by his repeated desertion of his allies, and his readiness to ally himself with the Turk; and with age came something of cruelty and bigotry. Persecution became increasingly the order of the day, especially after the Treaty of Crépy, when it paid to persecute in order to preserve the friendship of the Emperor. In his last years Francis sullied his name by two acts of cruelty which had not the excuse of fanaticism. The massacre of the Vaudois (August, 1545) and the reprisals at Meaux were acts of wanton persecution for which there was no justification. In the former at least 800 persons were massacred, including many women and children. In the latter sixty-one reformers were arrested (8 September, 1546)¹ and fourteen were condemned, tortured and burnt; the Pope actually wrote to remonstrate with the King for his cruelty.

Indeed there are few more unlovely pictures than that presented by the French court in the closing days of the reign. The King himself, his temper gravely affected by the painful malady from which he suffered,² growing stingier, harder, more selfish with advancing years; long spells of depression relieved only by unnatural outbursts of gaiety; the royal family reduced by the deaths of the Dauphin and the Duke of Orleans, and the absence of Madeleine, now Queen of Scotland.³ Catherine de' Medici's sinister presence, and the continual rivalry between Mme. d'Étampes, for whom the King's passion was waning as she grew older, and Diane de Poitiers, the mistress of the Dauphin, are relieved only by the gracious figure of Margaret of Angoulême. Amidst these surroundings, on 31 March, 1547, Francis breathed his last.¹ For all his splendours and all the picturesqueness of his reign, it is diffi-

¹ *Infra*, p. 44, note.

² A purulent tumour in the stomach.

³ Madeleine married James V, King of Scotland (1 January, 1536). On her death James married Mary of Guise,

cult not to be glad to get rid of him. A voluptuary is seldom either useful or attractive in old age, and shallow gaiety is only tolerable in comparative youth. He left France, it is true, as strong as he found her, but it is difficult not to conclude that this was more because of the inherent weakness of his opponent and the historical necessity for a powerful France than because of his own prowess or sagacity. He was a lavish patron of the Arts and he did something to restore letters. Let those who can derive enjoyment from the shallow splendours of Renaissance architecture in France or from the hollow classicism into which her literature quickly degenerated thank him for it. To many Francis must always seem the embodiment of all that is worst in the French character and of little of what is best.

¹ "Les dames plus que les ans luy causèrent la mort. Il eut quelques bonnes fortunes et beaucoup de mauvaises. Les femmes faisoient tout mesme les généraux et capitaines" (Saulx-Tavannes, "Mémoires," in Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. I, VIII. 136).

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CHAPTER XX

THE LAST KINGS OF THE HOUSE OF VALOIS (1547-1589)

HENRY II (1547-1559)

“**M**ADAME D'ESTAMPES donne les bagues du roy Francois à Madame de Valentinois et sort par la porte dorée.” In these words Tavannes describes the change consequent on the death of Francis I with an irony which is probably unconscious. Francis had been much vexed by the boorish taciturnity of the Dauphin, and Madame d'Étampes had suggested the remedy which seemed natural to a person of her antecedents: *Il faut le faire amoureux*; and the King had introduced his fifteen-year-old son to a lady of twice his age but of great charm and apparently imperishable beauty.¹ Diane de Poitiers, afterwards Duchesse de Valentinois, was the daughter of Jean de Poitiers and widow of Louis de Brezé, Grand Seneschal of Normandy. She acquired complete control over Henry and converted him from a boorish youth into an active and vigorous man. In spite of the difference in their ages her ascendancy was never threatened, and Henry was wearing her colours in the tournament which cost him his life. Henry had a repulsion for his low-born Italian wife, which students of her subsequent career will not find surprising, and Catherine de' Medici's position as reigning Queen was most humiliating. Occupied with the cares of her numerous and sickly children, she paid obsequious attentions to her husband's mistress, on whose sufferance alone she seemed to remain at Court.

The reign of Henry was therefore to a large extent that

¹ She was still wonderfully beautiful at fifty.

THE GUISES

René II of Anjou

Anthony the Good

↑

↓

[House of Lorraine]

Antoinette,
dau. of Count of
Vendôme

= Claude, Duke of Guise
(5th son of René
ob. 1550)

John,
Cardinal of
Lorraine

3. Claude, Duke of
Aumâle
ob. 1573

2. Charles, Cardinal
of Lorraine

1. Francis
(*ob.* 1563) = Anne
d'Este

4. Louis, Cardinal
of Guise

René d'Elbeuf

James V = (2) Mary
of Scotland

Francis II = Mary
of France

Henry
(murdered 1588)

Charles,
Duke of Mayenne
(*ob.* 1611)

Louis,
Cardinal of Guise
(*ob.* 1588)

Catherine
= Louis, Duke
of Montpensier

of Diane de Poitiers; but it was also that of the rival favourites, and its history is largely that of the struggle between the Montmorencys and the Guises. For the first ten years the former, represented by the old Constable, Anne de Montmorency, and his nephews the Colignys, predominated; but the House of Guise was steadily rising in importance, and its rise is most vital in the history of the last Valois kings. The Guises were a cadet branch of the House of Lorraine. Claude, the reigning Duke, who died in 1550, was a brother of Anthony of Lorraine, who had died in 1544. Anthony had fought for Francis I at Marignano, but had subsequently, and perhaps designedly, identified himself with the defence of the north-eastern frontier, in particular at the crisis which had followed the battle of Pavia. In this way he had come to be regarded as the special protector of Paris—ever sensitive to its vulnerability from this quarter—and to possess a personal hold over the capital which was subsequently to be of the greatest service to his family. The Duke's brother John was Cardinal of Lorraine; but his children altogether eclipsed the older generation. Francis, the eldest, who became Duke on his father's death (1550), soon proved himself the best soldier of his day. A wound which he received in a skirmish with the English near Boulogne left a scar across his face and earned him the title of *le Balafré* (a title afterwards inherited by his son Henry, who bore a similar scar from a wound which he got in the skirmish of Dormans, 1575). At the moment of which we are speaking Francis was the constant comrade of Henry II, his antagonist at tennis and his companion in the chase. His brother Charles succeeded his uncle as Cardinal of Lorraine, and won laurels in another field. Endowed with eloquence, grace, a majestic presence, and an intellect of extraordinary quickness, he became one of the most celebrated diplomatists of the day, and to him, more possibly than to any one else, was due the successful issue of the Council of Trent. Another brother, Louis, became Cardinal of Guise; for the Guises were the darlings of the Church. A sister, Mary, brought royal honours into the family by her marriage (1538) to James V of Scotland. When her daughter—Mary Queen

of Scots—married the Dauphin of France (1558) the ascendancy of the house was complete ; *devindrent par ce moyen les maîtres de la Cour*.¹ Together they formed a dazzling constellation—dazzling not only by their position and material splendour, but by their force of character and personality ; just those qualities which we shall find ominously wanting in the last Valois kings. The interests of the house of Guise were, or at any rate quickly came to be, non-national. They stood in some degree for the old antagonism between Lotharingia and Francia, for the more recent rivalry between Burgundy and France, and in an extreme degree for the supremacy of the Catholic Church. It is a surprise and a shock to find that an interest so essentially foreign and disintegrating could command in the sixteenth century, in France, so much support as it undoubtedly did. It opens our eyes to the fact that the idea of the unity of Christendom still occupied a place in men's minds altogether greater than the idea of patriotism. Only after years of civil war did the latter idea begin to predominate, and that only under the rule of the most sagacious of monarchs and by dint of great concessions to the religious ideal ; in fact through the adoption by the patriotic party of the very principle of religious unity which had been the chief weapon of their rivals. But in diagnosing the cause of the ascendancy of the house of Guise, we must not forget to make due allowance for the force of character of its members and their undoubted ability, for the cunning with which they acquired, and afterwards maintained, their hold on the imaginations of men, of the Parisians in particular ; and also for the feebleness and discredit of the kings with whom they were thrown in contact.

Amongst these splendid courtiers Henry II appears something of a lay figure. It was his physique that chiefly impressed his contemporaries. “ Eut plus de vertu corporelle que spirituelle.”² All muscle, he devoted himself with passionate enthusiasm to athletic exercises. In spite of his subordination

¹ Palma Cayet, “ Chronologie novénaire ” (in Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. I, XII.), p. 163.

² Tavannes, op. cit. p. 225.

to his favourites and his mistress, Henry II was the last of the Valois to give any proof of virility. Without his father's brilliance he stands out as at least a man compared with his three successors. We must remember that he was cut off when he had hardly reached his prime, and just at the moment when, after the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559), he seemed about to adopt a definite policy. It is possible that, had he lived, he might have saved his country from the horrible ordeal of the Religious Wars.

The first cloud in the new reign arose in the direction of England, where the Protector Somerset inflicted on the young Queen of Scots the terrible defeat of Pinkie (1547). Mary took refuge at the French Court, and Henry, "se souvenant de l'honteux paix des anglois" (i.e. the Treaty of Ardres),¹ attacked Boulogne. It was in this campaign that Gaspard de Coligny made his name as a commander.² England, hampered by domestic troubles, restored Boulogne to France in 1550.³ Coligny went to England to negotiate peace and, besides playing football at Hampton Court, may have received during this visit his first impressions of Protestantism. From 1550 till the death of Edward VI in 1553 there was an uneasy peace between the two countries.

Charles V meanwhile had been dealing with the terrible welter in Germany. His victory at Mühlberg in 1547 seemed at last to give him the chance of bringing the Protestants to their knees. But his *Interim* of Augsburg (15 May, 1548) simply offended the Pope without in the least settling the religious question. Worn out by ill-health, advancing years, and the disappointments of his life, the Emperor desired to see some settlement of the succession. It was at this juncture that the fortunes of the German Reformers were revived by the adhesion to their cause of Maurice, Elector of Saxony (1551). He opened secret negotiations with Henry II, and on 15 January, 1552, the Treaty of Chambord was concluded

¹ *Supra*, pp. 27, 28.

² And in particular as a disciplinarian: his ordinances and improved instructions were officially sanctioned in 1551.

³ France paying a sum of 400,000 crowns.

between France and the German Protestant Princes. This treaty has a special interest as the first suggestion¹ of the building up of a French political clientele in Western Germany, which was destined to become under Richelieu such an important feature of French foreign policy and which endured until 1813. On both sides a political rather than a religious agreement, it was regarded by Henry as a mere move in the secular quarrel with the Emperor. He could, and did, throw 35,000 men into Lorraine; but he could not, and did not, for a moment slacken the repression of heresy at home, anticipating in this the policy of Richelieu.

The problem with which France was confronted was indeed a perplexing one, and it will confront us continually, and long after the last of the Valois is in his grave. Her national interests, her European mission, threw France into opposition to the great Catholic-Habsburg power, and therefore into the arms of the heretics who were the most serious obstacle in the path of that power. To forego their assistance would be for France to be untrue to her national mission. On the other hand France, Catholic to the core, cried out for religious unity even at the expense of national policy. And it was their toleration of heresy in the interests of secular policy that in later years shook the throne of the last of the Valois and brought into being the famous "League," which, placing religion before loyalty, truckled to the foreigner in the interests of orthodoxy, and went near to set the House of Guise upon the throne. It was their reconciliation with the Church which made it possible for the Bourbons to ascend the throne. It is easy to call the policy of the later Valois vacillating and Catherine de' Medici over-subtle, but it is difficult to see how they could have reconciled their secular with their religious interest or to say which of these should have been sacrificed. Never were kings confronted with a more difficult problem, and perhaps there was really no way out of it other than the long and painful way which circumstances provided.

¹ Unless we count Francis I's negotiations with the German Protestants. *Supra*, p. 24.

Henry conducted the campaign against the Emperor in person, took the "Three Bishoprics" (Metz, Toul, and Verdun), but was repulsed from Strassburg. In August, 1552, Charles V made terms with his rebellious subjects, with the result that France was isolated and that he was able to cross the Rhine and lay siege to Metz. Francis of Guise laid the foundations of his military reputation in his splendid defence of that city. He held it with great skill for three months, after which the Emperor abandoned the attempt. This was a point not only in the Valois-Habsburg struggle but also in the Guise-Montmorency struggle; Francis of Guise the victor of Metz could now claim to be at least the equal of Gaspard of Coligny the victor of Boulogne.¹ Moreover the campaign of 1553 was disastrous to the Montmorencys. The Constable himself was a poor general, and the only victory of the following year—that of Renty (13 August, 1554)—was as much the work of Guise as that of Coligny. Hostilities dragged on until 1556, when by the Truce of Vaucelles (15 February, 1556) the Emperor withdrew from the war and shortly afterwards retired—a chagrined and broken man—to the seclusion of a monastery. His son, Philip II, inherited Spain, the Netherlands, Milan, Sicily, Sardinia, and the Indies, while the Imperial dignities together with the German inheritance were more gradually transferred to his brother Ferdinand. Meanwhile Pope Paul IV had plunged into hostilities with Spain in Italy and had applied to France for help. Henry II was attracted by the idea of becoming a second Louis XII, and once more French arms were seen in the Peninsula. On this occasion Francis of Guise put his fortune to the test in Italy. Confronted, however, with the Duke of Alva, he found himself powerless to conquer Naples. "God made Himself a Spaniard" it was said. And while the flower of the French army with its most capable commander was engaged on this fruitless expedition, Philip II seized the opportunity of striking a blow on the north-east frontier, where the Constable had been engaged in a disastrous campaign. Paris was Philip's object, and Saint-Quentin lay

¹ See Genealogical table, *infra*, p. 39, for connexion between the Colignys and the de Montmorencys.

in his path. The traditional defender of that frontier was in Italy ; and Montmorency was defeated under the walls of Saint-Quentin by Emanuel Philibert of Savoy, Lieutenant-General of Philip II, the last great battle in which the supremacy of the Spanish infantry was maintained (10 August, 1557). "How many days from here to Paris?" Philip had asked when he came up on the day after the battle. "Three days," answered one of Francis' veterans, "for the King has still three armies." It was untrue, Henry had but one army, and that was in Italy with Guise ; but he had within the city of Saint-Quentin Montmorency's nephew, the stouthearted Admiral Coligny.¹ With 2500 men, behind walls already crumbling,² the Admiral held out for twenty-four days against 45,000. Then the city fell. But the danger was over ; Paris was saved. Philip's determination had been shaken by the resistance offered by Saint-Quentin, and his army was dwindling away. He was short of money and only really able to strike a rapid blow, and this had been thwarted by Coligny. On this occasion at any rate it had been the latter and not Guise who had saved the capital. When Guise, who had been hurriedly recalled from Italy, reached Paris, it was to find the danger past. Nevertheless he managed to make profit out of the occasion. The Parisians, who had been in a highly nervous state and had even begun to leave the city, were wild with joy at his arrival. Here was a tangible army with their idol at its head. Coligny they had not seen, and at any rate he was now a prisoner. The appearance of Guise seemed a guarantee against all fear of Spanish attack. The Duke saw that he must retrieve his reputation by some *coup de théâtre*, and decided to strike at Calais. What enterprise could be more dramatic than the seizure, so soon after the panic created by the defeat of Saint-Quentin, of

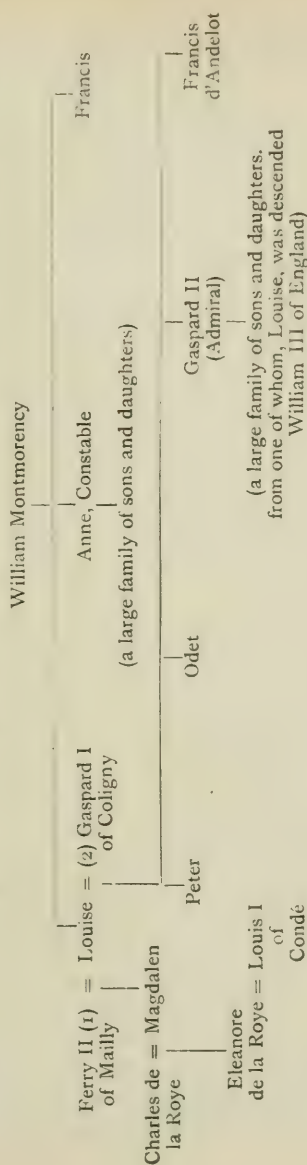
¹ Coligny, as Governor of Picardy, was specially responsible for the defence of the north-east frontier. Gaspard had been Colonel General of the infantry, and when he became Admiral in 1552 his brother d'Andelot stepped into his position. The office of Admiral of France was confined to the ports of Normandy and Picardy, but it brought with it the command in chief of all naval affairs and was one of the great offices of state.

² The fortifications of Saint-Quentin were quite antiquated and very extensive.

this redoubtable stronghold? What enterprise was more likely to restore the courage of the nation and at the same time the fortunes of the house of Guise? Undaunted by the tradition that the place was impregnable—a tradition which had grown up during the two hundred years of English occupation—he went about his task with methodical minuteness and brought it to a triumphant issue. In December, 1557, and January, 1558, Calais and its outwork Guines passed once more into French hands. This exploit greatly enhanced the prestige of the Guises, and when in the following April their niece, Mary Queen of Scotland, was married to the Dauphin Francis, it seemed that there was no pitch of power to which they might not aspire. It was probably at this moment that they first began to dream of supplanting the house of Bourbon as first princes of the blood. They cannot of course have anticipated the early extinction of the house of Valois; but they began to offer a definite rivalry to the house of Bourbon.

Of that house the King of Navarre, Anthony of Bourbon, was the nominal head. But his shallow and irresponsible character unfitted him for leadership. Of his brothers, François of Enghien, the victor of Ceresole, had been accidentally killed (1546); Charles, Cardinal of Bourbon, was a nonentity; John, Count of Soissons, had lost his life in the Battle of Saint-Quentin. Louis, Prince of Condé, stood out by mere force of character as the leader of the Bourbons. He was married to Eléonore de Roye, a great-niece of Montmorency, and this union combined with a common jealousy of the Guises to draw together the houses of Montmorency and Bourbon. Moreover it brought the Colignys, who were also nephews of the Constable (and sons by a second marriage of the grandmother of Eléonore de Roye), into close relations with Condé. This *rapprochement*, which was destined to have such remarkable consequences, was cemented by their common inclination towards the reformed religion. Condé's birth and upbringing impelled him towards Protestantism; with the Colignys it was more a matter of conviction. Their Calvinism was all the more profound by reason of the gradual nature of their con-

TABLE TO SHOW THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE HOUSES OF MONTMORENCY AND COLIGNY



version. It was at this juncture that the Bishop of Arras—afterwards the Cardinal of Granvelle—one of the leading diplomatists of his day, procured for himself a secret interview with the Guises, and suggested to them on behalf of Philip II the idea of a union between the Kings of France and Spain, in the interests of religion, and proposed that they should make themselves the sponsors of this plan. As a trump card he put into their hands proof of the heresy of the Colignys. The Guises were not slow to perceive the advantage which this revelation gave them. Either Condé must weaken his cause by repudiating the Colignys or he must declare himself for reform and so alienate the Constable, who was well known to be a staunch Catholic. Nor were they slow to act. The Cardinal of Lorraine hurried off to reveal the secret to Henry II. He found the King at supper. D'Andelot, the Admiral's brother, was immediately summoned to the royal presence and ordered then and there to avow his adherence to Catholicism. When he refused Henry flung one of the candles from the supper table at his head and ordered him off to the Bastille.

The Guises, although willing enough to make use of the secret which the Bishop of Arras had revealed to them, had not been won over by his blandishments to the idea of peace with Spain. Though no doubt they were turning over in their minds his suggestion that they should make themselves the champions of the great scheme for a religious union, they were not prepared to abandon, in the height of their military successes, the hope of dictating a peace favourable to France. Whatever their subsequent attitude towards Spain, they must be exonerated from any share in the negotiations which now led to the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. There can be little doubt that, if at this juncture France had remained firm and had kept up hostilities, Spain would have been forced to accept whatever terms her rival chose to dictate. Philip was at the end of his resources. The Duke of Savoy, who commanded the Spanish troops, had not a *réal* to pay his mercenaries with. Philip himself acknowledged that he desired peace at any price, and that if the King of France had not asked for it he

would have asked for it himself.¹ "I tell you," he wrote to Granvelle, "that it was utterly impossible to continue the war." What then persuaded Henry to negotiate? In the main jealousy of the growing prestige of the Guises: jealousy on the part of the king himself, on the part of Diane de Poitiers, and not least on the part of the Constable, who was weary of his captivity, was himself anxious to head a religious union between France and Spain, and by no means desired to see his policy fathered by the Guises.

Guise had won a further success in the capture of Thionville (22 June, 1558); and the defeat of de Termes at Grave-lines (13 July, 1558) was by no means a set-off to this. Nevertheless, the French Government opened negotiations and, on 3 April, 1559, France and Spain signed the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. France abandoned all her claims in Italy with the exception of Saluzzo and five other places in Savoy and Piedmont which were to be the subject of papal arbitration. Marienburg, Thionville, Damvilliers, Montmédy, were also restored. But France kept the Three Bishoprics,² Saint-Quentin, Ham, le Catelet, and Théroutanne. She also retained Calais for eight years, after which she was either to restore it or pay 500,000 crowns. Philip II was to marry a Valois princess. The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis rings down the curtain on the period of the Italian Wars which had begun in 1483. It records the failure of France to secure the objects for which ostensibly those wars had been fought. The fact that she had indemnified herself for the abandonment of her Italian ambitions by an extension of her boundaries to the north-east probably strikes us more favourably than it struck contemporaries, who almost universally regarded this treaty as shameful and ignominious. *Blasable* and *dommageable* are the epithets used to describe it. In reality it meant that France had for the time being abandoned as impossible the duplication involved in the

¹ Philippe II to Granvelle, 12 February, 1559. "Papiers d'Etat du Cardinal de Granvelle" (1844), v. 453.

² The cession of the Three Bishoprics lacked the sanction of the Empire, which was not granted until the Treaties of Westphalia, ninety years later.

policy of "Protestant abroad and Catholic at home": that Henry had shelved his secular in order to carry out his religious policy, in other words to persecute his own subjects. There is this to be said for the plan that, had he been able to crush Protestantism at home, he might have resumed the national mission with more chance of success.¹

Henry died and his successors trimmed, hedged, and tried to play off one party against the other. It was this trimming—the policy which we associate with Catherine de' Medici—and not the determination to adopt strong measures for the enforcement of religious unity—that involved France in the long and disastrous struggle of the religious wars, a struggle which reduced her to a negligible quantity in Europe. Henry II did not long survive the Treaty; indeed that event was indirectly the cause of his death.² For it was in a tournament during the rejoicings held to celebrate the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth to Philip II, and his sister Margaret to Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, according to its terms, that he received the wound that killed him. Running a tilt with Montgomery, the Captain of the Scottish Guard, a splinter of his opponent's lance entered his vizor, inflicting a wound of which the King, after lingering a few days, died on 10 July, 1559.

Henry II had signed the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis with the clear intention of dealing with the religious situation at home. His successors were committed to some extent to this policy. For a time therefore we have to close the book of

¹ "Le roi aperçut le danger bien que tard, et voyant que ce peuple qui était habitué à tant d'obéissance, en était venu à un tel point d'insolence que non seulement on n'observait pas ses édits, et l'on ne craignait pas ses menaces, mais . . . qu'on tenait des assemblées où accouraient un grand nombre de gens de toute qualité de tout sexe et de tout âge, Henri II pour ne perdre tout-à-fait son autorité et l'obéissance de ses sujets, fut forcé de conclure la paix avec le roi catholique à des conditions fort désavantageuses, afin de pouvoir éteindre au dedans cet affreuse incendie qui brûlait de toutes parts" (Michele Suriano, "Commentarii del regno di Francia," in *Relations des Ambassadeurs Vénitiens*; ed. Tommaseo, 1838, I. 521).

² "Paix blasmable dont les flambeaux de joye furent les torches funèbre du Roy Henry II," says a lurid chronicler (Tavannes, *op. cit.* p. 222).

European politics to turn dull pages concerned with civil war and religious strife. Before we do so we must try and realize the religious condition of France in 1559. We have already spoken of the Renaissance as the awakening of a new spirit; the breaking down of ancient barriers, admitting a flood of light into dark mediaeval chambers. It was clear that this emancipation of the intellect must have its effect on Religion. How could Religion linger among the cobwebs, while her sister Learning was leaping in the sun? But how on the other hand could Religion be brought into line with new ideas? Could official orthodoxy be persuaded to reform itself, or must the whole fabric of the Catholic Church come crashing down and the grand ideal of Christian unity be lost among the ruins? Did liberty of conscience involve negation of authority? These are the questions which rise up on the threshold of the Reformation; and France had her own answer for them. Through the long and dismal period of the Wars of Religion the one thing that stands out is the refusal of the country to "rise" to Protestantism. This was because there was a substitute in Gallicanism which completely took the wind out of the Protestant sails. "A reformation of the Church by the Church, in the Church, and with the Church" was the aim of the earliest French reformers, as it was in later days of the earlier Jansenists.¹ Nothing was further from their minds than the idea of separation from the Catholic fold. Lefèvre d'Étaples, "the man on the threshold of the new era who refused to enter it," Briçonnet; Margaret of Angoulême, who as Professor Lindsay says² "cannot be called a Protestant" although she "had broken completely with mediaeval modes of religion, life and thought"; Francis I himself, drawn in his careless amateur way to the new movement, were imbued in different degrees with the conception of a Church reformed and spiritualized by its own spontaneous action. It is easy to wish that this ideal could have been realized, that the ship could have been steered between the Scylla of Calvinism and the Charybdis of the counter-reformation. But the time for

¹ Lindsay, "History of the Reformation" (1907-8), II, 141.

² *Ibid.* II, 139.

reform with kid gloves was unfortunately already past. The moderate reformers had been too moderate, and then in turn the extreme reformers became too extreme. The violence of the German reformers made moderate reform impossible: the extremists, as always, brought discredit on the entire movement, and the attitude of the most violent became the standard by which all were judged. A better king than Francis I might have accomplished reform on the lines laid down by Lefèvre d'Étaples. But though Francis' heart was sympathetic it was shallow, and he was ready to persecute with the best when it was to his interest to do so. In the face of the persecution which followed the catastrophe of Pavia, things had taken the inevitable turn, and in May, 1528, the era of Protestant violence began with the breaking of a statue of the Virgin; and men and women had repeatedly to be punished for blasphemy and sacrilege. Francis was blown from one side to another by every wind of foreign politics. His opposition to the Emperor made the Protestants useful to him, but his agreement with the Pope and the marriage of his son to Catherine de' Medici threw him back on to the side of orthodoxy.

In 1534 an incident occurred in Paris which greatly injured the cause of moderate reform in France. The city was placarded with violent and blasphemous denunciations of the Mass. This led to an outburst of persecution, and in January the King ordered a great Catholic demonstration in which he himself appeared bare-headed with a taper in his hand.¹ It is a curious illustration of the confusion of the period that this did not prevent Calvin from dedicating his *Institution Chrétienne* to the "Most Christian King" (August, 1535), and that in turn did not prevent Francis from issuing fresh edicts against heresy and ending his reign in a smoke of persecution.² The rise of a Reformer who was French by birth and who wrote

¹ Many well-known Frenchmen, including Clément Marot the famous translator of the Psalms, were obliged to leave the country.

² The most notable acts of repression being the massacre of the Waldenses of the Durance and the martyrdom of the "fourteen of Meaux". *Supra*, p. 28.

in the French language, now altered the course of the Reformation in France. Jean Calvin was a native of Noyon who had, since 1536, lived intermittently at Geneva, whence he had propounded his tenets with great vigour. What specially commended his teaching to the French was its definite organization, which satisfied the craving for order persistent in the Latin mind. It quickly became clear that Calvinism would be the ultimate form of French Protestantism, and during the reign of Henry II it was carefully organized from Geneva. Calvinism was far more anti-Catholic and militant than Lutheranism, a fact that had its importance afterwards.

Rigidly orthodox in his domestic policy, because any infringement of orthodoxy was, on account of the *Concordat*, even more of a menace to the absolutism of the Crown than to the supremacy of the Church, the King eagerly repressed heresy. In 1547 a strong edict was directed against blasphemers, and a *chambre ardente* (a royal, not an ecclesiastical Court) was created to deal with cases of heresy. Of its activity we have proof in the official register of its sentences. The Edict of Châteaubriand (1551) set up inquisitorial regulations and attempted to co-ordinate the legislation against heretics, and the Edict of Compiègne (1557) insisted on the death penalty for all persons convicted of heresy. It seems very shocking to the modern mind, and it would seem more so if we were to embark on a catalogue of horrors from the sentences. But we must remember that toleration was an almost unknown virtue, and that the Reformers themselves did not deny the justice of persecution.¹ Repression in fact, with all the ghastly punishments by which it was carried out, was quite in keeping with the spirit of the age. It would therefore be foolish to anathematize the Government for its cruelty. It would be far more to the point to condemn it for its failure to see that persecution is the surest way to increase

¹ "Qu'on mette en oubli toute humanité quand il est question de combattre pour sa Gloire." The words are Calvin's! Can we doubt that if the positions had been reversed, the persecuted would have become the persecutors?

the number and the violence of heretics. "Les feus confirment les hérétiques" sighs a contemporary who did see this, "un mort gâte mille vivants."¹ Persecution in short did not fulfil its object. The Reformers only grew more provocative; they even had the temerity, just as the King was girding himself to fresh repression, to hold an assembly of Ministers and Elders in Paris and there to draw up their Confession of Faith and Articles of Discipline.

The Government was by this time thoroughly alarmed, for not only was heresy definitely organized, but it was gaining recruits in high quarters; the Colignys, Anthony of Navarre, the husband of the King's first cousin Jeanne d'Albret (the daughter of Margaret of Angoulême by her second husband).² These were important converts; the latter especially, considering how near the House of Navarre-Bourbon was to the Throne. This capture of French Protestantism by what was really a political party gave the Reform movement a dangerous appearance, but in reality deprived it of much of its driving force and religious spirit; it despiritualized a movement which should have been essentially spiritual. At the close of Henry II's reign Protestantism was by no means numerically strong; Calvin estimated the French Protestants at 300,000. The desire to grapple with the religious trouble had, as we have seen, facilitated the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. Henry was preparing to confront the situation. He came down to the *Parlement*, which had been displaying slackness in persecution, and purged it of its more moderate members. The "*Mercuriale* of 1559," as this purgation was called, was one of his last acts. A month later he met his death as recounted elsewhere. His reign had seen the execution of eighty-eight heretics.

FRANCIS II (1559-1560)

Henry's eldest son Francis, who now ascended the throne, was a feeble, bilious lad of fifteen, very much in love with the little *reinette d'Ecosse* who had "only to

¹Tavannes, op. cit. 225.

²See Genealogical Table, p. 86.

smile to turn the heads of all Frenchmen''. Francis' accession involved the fall of Henry's counsellors; Diane de Poitiers and Montmorency disappeared from Court and their place was taken by the King's uncles, Francis Duke of Guise and his brother the Cardinal of Lorraine, of whom the Venetian ambassador wrote *Il est Pape et Roi*. And yet the Guises did not stand quite alone. For beside them we become conscious of the presence of one whom men had come to regard as a nonentity, but who was in reality ambitious with the ambition of those who can bide their time; a politician worthy of the country of Machiavelli and of her Medicean ancestors—the widowed Queen, Catherine de' Medici.

Catherine saw that the first essential step on the road to power was to ostracize the Princes of the Blood lest they should claim a share in the government. She therefore accepted the domination of the Guises, not because she liked it but as a set-off to the ambitions of the house of Bourbon, that is of Anthony of Navarre and his brother Condé. The Guises quickly showed their hand. They stood for a continuance of the policy of vigorous repression which Henry II had inaugurated. But in the eyes of some Frenchmen at least they must also have stood for a foreign as opposed to a national interest; for Lotharingia against Francia; for alliance with, instead of war against, the house of Habsburg; for the ostracism also of those great families which claimed a share in the government of the kingdom. The religious situation was confused by the political situation. Protestantism ceased to be a wholly religious matter, and men began to go over from political motives. It was an almost imperceptible movement at first but in the end it turned the balance.¹ It was the political rather than the religious element in the Huguenot² party which made it so serious a menace to the State and which ultimately ruined it and reduced it to the miserable "police" success of the Edict of Nantes, itself a political rather than a religious settlement. Had Huguenotism kept clear of politics

¹ *Infra*, p. 69.

² The word "Huguenot" is derived from the German "Eidgenossen," applied to the Genevese when they joined the Swiss Confederation.

and remained a purely spiritual movement, it would either have gone much farther or not so far. Anthony of Bourbon, who was now not only the natural leader of the Reformers but the natural head of the Royal Council, was unfitted by his character to lead a party. His wife Jeanne d'Albret, however, was a convinced and courageous Protestant, and his brother Condé, "the little man with the big heart," had a touch of both political and military genius. It was said that he was insincere and an intriguer. Undoubtedly he had political ambition and undoubtedly he lacked the conviction which makes a leader irresistible. "Condé," says Michele Suriano,¹ "is of a lively character and little suited for treating matters of State of either Government or War. He is violently attached to his sect." Gaspard de Coligny, on the other hand, was a true patriot and a convinced Protestant, "Great in council and great in war" (*sage mur et avisé politique*), if he lacked anything it was just that elasticity and tact of which Condé had too much. He was so true a patriot that when civil war became inevitable his reluctance to take part in it was only overcome by the prayers of his wife. With such men at their head it was clear that the Huguenots would not want for leaders.

Condé and Coligny in February, 1560, decided to try and extricate the King from the hands of the "Lorrainers". The conspiracy which led to the "Tumult of Amboise" is difficult to unravel. Its actual execution was left to a Picard gentleman called Renaudie, who assembled (in February) at Nantes all those who were opposed to the government of the Guises.² But Catherine, who by this time resented the domination of the Guises, probably favoured it passively.³ English gold may have assisted its prosecution, and there can be little

¹ Op. cit. p. 557.

² Renaudie had fled from justice to Geneva and had attached himself to Protestantism.

³ d'Aubigné, "Histoire Universelle" (ed. de Ruble for Société de l'histoire de France, 1886, etc.), I. 273, declares that de l'Hôpital was privy to the plot; this is probably untrue.

doubt that Condé was at the bottom of it.¹ The conspiracy was directed at the Guises alone and not at the King. It was executed with a strange ineptitude, with the result that the conspirators, instead of finding the Court in the open town of Blois, found it in the strong castle of Amboise. Moreover it had been betrayed to the Guises, and as the conspirators in small detached bands approached or entered Amboise, they were seized and disarmed. Guise could always dispose of a large military force. The Cardinal insisted on fierce reprisals. The crenellations of the Castle were hung with the bodies of the victims, and the Court, headed by Catherine who was always ready to adapt herself to altered conditions, witnessed the executions from the windows *comme s'il eust esté question de voir jouer quelque momerie*.² Many were drowned in the river, and in all as many as 1200 persons suffered death.

In point of fact the Guises had gone too far. They maintained of course that they had acted in the interests of the King; but every one knew that they had only been protecting themselves. Catherine profited by the bad odour into which the "Lorrainers" fell. She was inclining more and more to a policy of toleration; it was now that she procured the Chancellorship for the humane but unpractical de l'Hôpital (1 April, 1560). And the Edict of Romorantin³ (May, 1560), which virtually abrogated the jurisdiction of the Inquisition in France, although he was not himself the author of it, was the first step in the new Chancellor's policy. With de l'Hôpital indeed toleration was a matter of conviction, with Catherine an item of policy, her method of "blowing cold" upon the Guises. Acting upon the advice of Coligny, she now (21 August) summoned to Fontainebleau an Assembly of Notables, before which the cause of toleration was pleaded by the Admiral, and that of repression by the Cardinal of Lorraine. It was

¹ Some of the conspirators acknowledged that Condé was the *chef muet* of the affair. D'Aubigné, op. cit. I. 268.

² Regnier de la Planche, "Histoire de l'estat de France" (1576), I. 97-8. See also d'Aubigné, op. cit. I. 270 and the engraving reproduced by Mennechet.

³ d'Aubigné, op. cit. I. 274 and note.

agreed that the States General, which had not met for fifty-four years,¹ should be called for the following December at Meaux. Irritated by violent pamphlets,² the most remarkable of which was called the *Épître envoyée au tigre de la France*,² and warned by the spurt of civil war in the South, the Guises determined to use the States General for the overthrow of the Bourbons. The venue was altered to Orleans, and in that city the Guises gathered an armed force so enormous that the deputies conceived themselves to be entering a camp rather than a court³; they then proceeded to shepherd their victims into the city.⁴ On his arrival at Orleans, Condé was at once dragged before a specially constituted tribunal and condemned to death. It is asserted by Palma Cayet, usually a very sane authority, that the Guises desired to provoke the young King to slay Anthony with his own hand, but that Catherine refused to sanction this proceeding. At best he was *tanquam captivus*.⁵ The Guises had contrived a design of great ingenuity and one which, if they could have carried it out, would have had far-reaching results, would have nipped the impending religious revolt in the bud, and anticipated both the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Suddenly, however, the whole situation was altered by an alarming change in the king's health. It became known that Francis II, who had always been fragile, was not likely to live. In her son's approaching death Catherine saw her opportunity. His brother Charles, the heir to the throne, was a minor, and a regency was inevitable. Navarre, as first Prince of the Blood, must of necessity have a share in the new government.

¹ The last assembly had been in 1506.

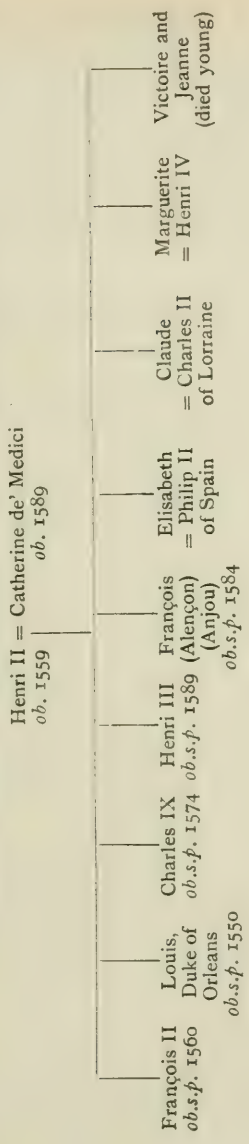
² This pamphlet begins with the following torrent of abuse: "Tigre enragé! Vipère venimeuse! Sépulcre d'abomination! Spectacle de malheur! Jusques à quand sera-ce que tu abuseras de la jeunesse de notre Roy?" "The Tiger" has been reproduced by the Académie des Bibliophiles in facsimile from the only known copy extant—one which escaped the flames in the burning of the Hôtel de Ville in 1871.

³ d'Aubigné, op. cit. i. 291.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 292.

⁵ Palma Cayet, op. cit. 164; Regnier de la Planche, op. cit. 281; Throckmorton, "Calendars" (1560), 390; and d'Aubigné, op. cit. i. 293.

THE CHILDREN OF HENRY II AND CATHERINE DE' MEDICI



Catherine, therefore, inspired perhaps by de l'Hôpital,¹ determined to pose as his saviour and so to bind him to her interests. In order to carry out this ingenious plan, she was willing to throw the whole responsibility for the plot against the Bourbons upon her now dying son; and over his deathbed her reconciliation with the Bourbons was effected. Scarcely had it been effected when Francis passed away (6 December, 1560). The Bourbons had been saved by the most opportune of accidents.

CHARLES IX (1560-1574)

"Mort soudaine et non prévue, qui changea tout le gouvernement de la Cour et de la France." Its most conspicuous result was to establish the Queen Mother in power. The real ascendancy of Catherine begins in 1560.² The Guises, having failed in their great attempt to clear the board of the Bourbons, now suffered a temporary eclipse. This was part of Catherine's policy, which was all checks and balances. She would preserve the Bourbons as a counterpoise to the Guises: she would favour Protestantism as a check on the pretensions of the Orthodox party: "jetais parfois de l'huile sur le feu et parfois de l'eau".³ The difficulty was that in rebuffing the Guises she rebuffed Catholic France. Either she must conciliate Catholic opinion by favouring the Guises, in which case they would quickly thrust her into the background, or she must ostracize the Guises and risk the alienation of the Catholics. It was a very complete dilemma. The best she could do was to temporize; and in religion she certainly had little conviction to trouble her. Michele Suriano indeed wrote that she was trying to keep her children in the Catholic faith,⁴ but there is small reason to think that she had any preference for the Mass, if it was more to her interest to join in Marot's Psalms. She would act as circumstances—not

¹ d'Aubigné, op. cit. i. 297.

² "The King's death," says Sir James Melville (Memoirs, ed. 1683, p. 29) "made a great change, the Queen Mother was glad at the death of King Francis her son, because she had no guiding of him."

³ d'Aubigné, op. cit. i. 203.

⁴ Michele Suriano, op. cit. p. 553.

conscience—prompted. “Tenait tout en balance” and in the end she failed from over-subtlety.

For the moment it was the Bourbons’ turn, and that of the reformed religion. Catherine and de l’Hôpital therefore met the States General with tolerant proposals. “Le coulteau,” said the Chancellor, “vaut peu contre l’esprit.” These conciliatory doctrines, together with provisions for the reform of abuses such as venality of office and *épices* (fees to judges) were embodied in an Ordinance (*Ordonnance d’Orléans*). The Estates presented their requests but refused to consider the question of subsidies, and were dismissed. They had effected little and cannot be reckoned among the great assemblies.¹

Catherine was still blowing hot upon the Bourbons; and Anthony was an admirable subject for her wiles. She created him Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom (March, 1561), but she knew that he was a mere tool in her hands. “Le lieu que le dict Roy de Navarre tient ici,” she wrote, “n’est que sulz moy et mon auctorité.”² Anthony—silly ear-ringed creature—was delighted, and writing to his wife (on 21 January, 1561) for seeds of melons and cucumbers to give to Catherine, boasted that he was enjoying *la bonne chère* at Court and the “Lorrainers” the reverse.³ The Catholics were becoming alarmed and the fanatical Montmorency determined to sink his family quarrel with the Guises and to throw over his nephews in order to strike a blow for the cause of religion. In abandoning his own nephews he allowed religion to triumph over family instincts. An alliance, known as “the Triumvirate,” was made between Montmorency, Guise, and the Marshal Saint-André (6 April, 1561), and Guise appealed to Catherine to “cease drinking from two fountains,” and to identify herself with the Catholic cause. The Queen Mother held on her course. Liberty of worship was proposed in a special assembly,

¹ See Hanotaux, “Richelieu,” op. cit. I. 369-370.

² Cp. Catherine de’ Medici, “Lettres” (ed. de la Ferrière and Bague-nault de Puchesse, 1880-1909), I. 178-180.

³ Antoine de Bourbon, “Lettres” (ed. 1877), op. cit. pp. 226-227. Also p. 231, where Anthony informs the Bailly of Amiens of the good relations existing between him and the Queen Mother.

in which the Council sat with the *Parlement*, and was only lost by three votes. Catherine gave orders that the Edict of July, 1561, which forbade all except orthodox religious assemblies, should not be enforced. The Estates which met at Pontoise in August were Protestant in tone, and went so far as to suggest the confiscation of clerical property. Catherine and de l'Hôpital used this as a lever to obtain from the clergy a large grant which helped to relieve the financial situation (*Contrat de Poissy*, 12 October, 1561). Catherine now summoned to Poissy a conference by means of which she hoped to arrive at some compromise between the religious parties.¹ To do so would be to snatch from the Guises their most valuable weapon. The Cardinal of Lorraine girded himself, therefore, for a great effort to prevent such a disaster. He was confronted in debate with De Bèze, Calvin's ablest lieutenant. The Cardinal was highly inflammatory, and doubtless did all in his power to secure the failure of the conference, which broke up without having advanced matters. Catherine was genuinely disappointed. A compromise would have been the greatest possible boon to her. "De quelque côté que tourne la fortune son principal soin est de gouverner, et ni pour les papistes ni pour les réformés elle n'est disposer de jouer sa destinée." She would not, it is true, stake her destiny for the Reformers, but for the moment the violence of the Catholic party drove her more and more into the arms of their opponents. In January, 1562, in the teeth of the Triumvirate, was passed an edict which under certain restrictions, granted liberty of worship to the Protestants outside walled towns, and even in those towns liberty of worship in private houses.

This edict was a radical blunder and—contrary to the wish of its author—was the direct cause of civil war. It roused the Catholics to fury, and the Guises were not slow to turn to political account the wounded feelings of the orthodox. That their Catholicism was subordinate to their political ambition is proved by the fact that their first step was to open negotiations with the Protestant Princes of Germany in the

¹ d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* I. 313 *sqq.*

hope of isolating the French Calvinists by detaching the German Lutherans. It was on his return from an interview with the Lutheran Duke of Würtemberg that Guise committed the act that actually set France aflame. As he passed through the town of Vassy his retainers set upon a congregation of Protestants who were worshipping in a barn, and several were killed (1 March, 1562). Guise made no attempt to stop the outrage. He probably thought it a perfectly trivial incident, and was genuinely surprised when he was greeted in Paris as a hero,¹ the populace crying *Vive Guise* as one cries *Vive le roi*.² When he found that the incident had been magnified into a great act of Catholic reprisal he took credit for it. In any case he was probably glad to provoke hostilities before Protestantism had organized itself. The affair of Vassy was followed by massacres at Cahors, Sens, Auxerre, and Tours, which made civil war inevitable. Catherine, who was still hoping to play off the Protestants against the Guises, entreated Condé to come to her help.³ His delay in doing so was disastrous to his cause. Guise, ever alert, was not slow to take advantage of Condé's indecision, and while the Protestants were wasting time he seized the persons of the King and Queen, thereby thrusting his opponents into the position of rebels.⁴ De l'Hôpital was dismissed "parcequ'il maintenait la reine à balancer des deux côtés". Once in Guise's hands Catherine saw that the balancing policy was at an end, and came down with perfect equanimity on the Guise side of the fence.

¹ But note it was against the Queen's express command that he entered Paris at all.

² d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* II. 10.

³ She wrote four (undated) letters to Condé, hinting that she welcomed his assistance against the Triumvirate. (Catherine de' Medici, "Lettres," *op. cit.* I. 281-4.) In the third of these letters she says: "My cousin, I see so many things which displease me that were it not for the trust I have in God and the assurance that you will help me to preserve this Kingdom . . . in spite of those who wish to lose everything" . . . etc., etc.

⁴ "The taking of the King or Paris is half the victory in Civil War" (Tavannes, *op. cit.* 250).

Nothing can be more certain than the fact that at this moment—the moment of the outbreak of the Civil War—France was irretrievably Catholic. Even allowing for the many who joined the Reformers from motives other than religious, the Huguenots probably never numbered more than one-tenth of the kingdom. That they were able to give so good an account of themselves, and in the end to obtain special treatment in the Edict of Nantes, was due to causes other than numerical strength. This is the moment to form some estimate both of their strength and of their weakness; and many of the peculiarities of French Protestantism were causes of both strength and weakness. In the first place they were never a popular but rather an aristocratic party; their ranks were recruited mainly from the lower nobility and upper *bourgeoisie*; a pungent contemporary epigram maintained that “the grandees adopted reform for ambition, the middle classes for Church property” (and also it might have been said for municipal independence), “and the lower classes for Paradise”. If so the seekers after Paradise were in a small minority: it was estimated that from one-third to one-half of the nobility were Huguenots. This fact alienated popular support and took the heart out of the movement, but it also gave it a military strength out of all proportion to its numbers. The Huguenots were always a dangerous military force, well led, well disciplined, concentrated, mobile, and specially strong in cavalry—just the kind of body that could carry on war indefinitely, and exact favourable terms, though never likely to impose its religion on the country.

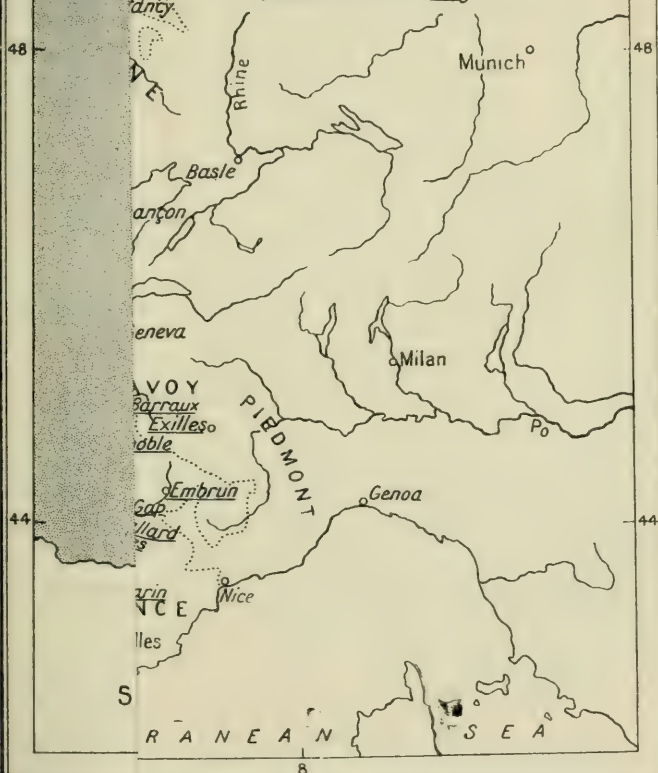
Secondly, Huguenotism was never a purely religious movement; it had of course its foundations in religion, but these were soon obscured by other motives. It was democratic in so far as it opposed itself to royal absolutism, constitutional (at first at any rate) in so far as it appealed against arbitrary government, national in so far as it resisted the anti-national trend of the Guises and the traitorous alliance with Spain, centrifugal in so far as it was founded on local idiosyncrasies and stirred the embers of local independence, and also purely factious when it appealed simply to ambition and the desire

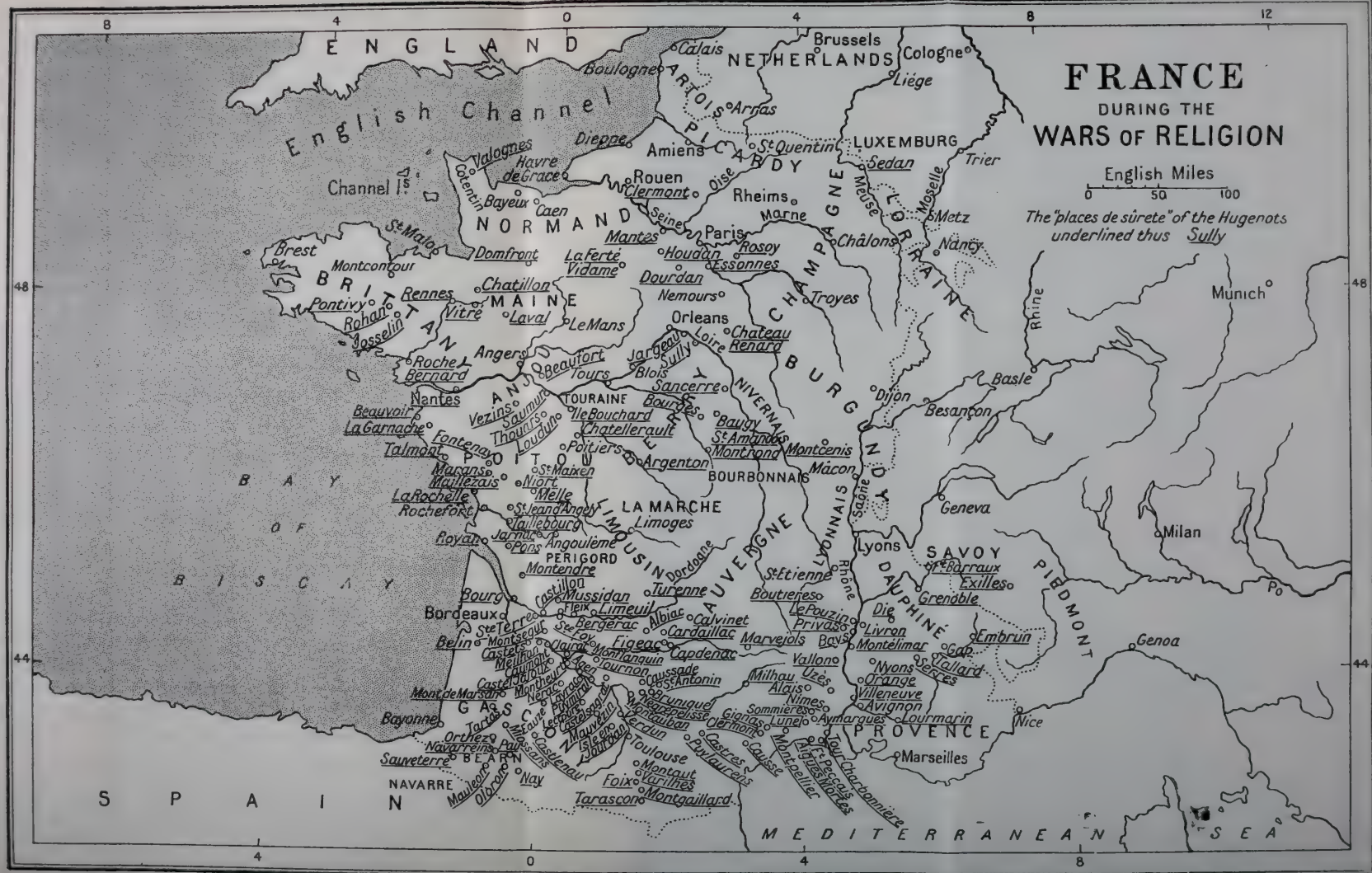
FRANCE

DURING THE WARS OF RELIGION

English Miles
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*The "places de sûreté" of the Huguenots
underlined thus Sully*





for change.¹ From each of these attributes it derived some strength; but the more political it became the more certain was its ultimate failure. It lost its driving force, surrendered its soul, and got nothing in exchange; its ultimate triumph was purely political, and the settlement of 1598, triumphant as it seemed and out of all proportion to the importance of the party, was political too and recorded the utter failure of Huguenotism as a religious movement.

At the outbreak of the Wars of Religion the Huguenots found themselves in complete eclipse in the capital; Paris was irreconcilably Catholic and Guisard. Their strength was in the Provinces and mainly in the provincial towns; from the peasantry they never received any encouragement. Geographically the heart of Huguenotism was in the West, and it had a good deal of support in the region between the Rhône and the Bay of Biscay; but Languedoc proper was uncertain and much depended on the attitude of that district. Normandy, Brittany, and Dauphiné also leant towards the reformers. Their chief stronghold was la Rochelle: strong, rich, and remote, the great seaport made an admirable base, and so long as they held it the Huguenots were in touch with the maritime Protestant powers to whom they looked for support. Such was the position of the Huguenot Party in 1562.

Catherine accepted the capture of the Court by the Guises with complacency; she might be counted on to return, at the first favourable opportunity, to her policy of balances. The defection from the Protestant cause of Anthony of Navarre² was more serious because of his name than because of any actual loss of strength. "More feeble in mind than heart," Anthony had been beguiled by the bait of Sardinia to abandon the traditional policy of his house. The ceremony

¹ A good instance of a noble who was a Huguenot for ambition is Bouillon (*infra*, p. 123 and p. 138). He was a regular stormy petrel who, as Richelieu said ("Mémoires," ed. Michaud et Poujoulat, Ser. II, VII. 279), changed his religion in order to be in a better position to increase his power.

² d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* II. 5; "Archives Curieuses" (ed. Cimber et Danjou, 1834-40), VI. 59.

of his recantation took place on Palm Sunday, 22 March, 1562, and was *un véritable évènement*. But in one respect his defection was a gain to the Huguenots as it left Condé and Coligny in command. Paris being hopelessly Guisard, the Huguenots fell back on the great towns of Central France and made Orleans their head-quarters.¹ Tours, Blois, and Bourges declared for them: Rouen also and le Havre in the North. The Catholics took Poitiers and Angers, and Guise in person, having compelled Bourges to capitulate, laid siege to Rouen. It was now when he found himself isolated at Orleans that Condé took the unpatriotic and unwise step of opening negotiations with England.

By the Treaty of Hampton Court (20 September, 1562) Elizabeth of England undertook to aid the Huguenots with a loan of 140,000 crowns and 6000 men in return for the surrender of le Havre² as a pledge for the eventual restoration of Calais. This treaty was a surrender of the national interests, and the transaction must have cut Coligny to the quick. But it also cut Guise to the quick. The captor of Calais could not stand still and see his conquest abandoned. Freed for a time from the sinister influence of his brother, Guise's really magnanimous nature had free play: and it must be recorded to his credit that he now proposed to Condé a reconciliation and a mutual war against England. The proposal was rejected and the Catholics, as a counterpoise to the English aid which the Protestants had secured, sought the assistance of the King of Spain. Spanish infantry and Swiss and Rhenish lansquenets filled the ranks of the Catholic army.

The chief event of the early days of this war was the siege of Rouen, which was held for the Huguenots by the same Montgomery who had been the innocent cause of the death of Henry II. Catherine herself took part in the operations.

¹ For the account of Condé's mad race for Orleans see la Noue, "Mémoires," in Michaud et Poujoulat, Ser. I, ix. 592.

² Le Havre had been seized by the Huguenots in May, 1563. Calais had been pledged to England by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (cf. *supra*, p. 41); it was to be handed to England in 1567.

The town fell (26 October, 1562) after a prolonged resistance, but not before Anthony of Navarre had received a fatal wound. His death (17 November) placed his son—afterwards Henry IV—under the complete control of his stoutly Protestant mother. The fall of Rouen and the isolation of the Huguenot forces decided the leaders of that party to seek the issue of a pitched battle rather than be caught like rats in a trap. Condé and Coligny moved up from Orleans and came into touch with the main army of their opponents at Dreux (19 December). The overbearing hot-headedness of the aged Constable nearly lost the day for the Catholics; he himself was captured and Saint-André was slain. It remained for the third of the "Triumvirs" to turn the tide. Guise advanced with fresh troops upon the exhausted Huguenots, captured Condé and routed Coligny. The whole glory and profit of the day belonged to him, and the capture of Montmorency was probably almost as welcome to him as that of Condé; for the Constable was ready to be his rival as soon as the necessity for an alliance should have ceased. It only remained for him to capture Orleans and dictate his own terms. Alone and shaken by defeat, even Coligny could not hope to withstand him. All was going well; the siege of Orleans was commenced and the city seemed likely to capitulate, when the Duke, in the flower of his age and at the height of his fame, with unlimited power just within his grasp, was struck down on 18 February, 1563, by the hand of an assassin.¹

Who was responsible for this act? It was freely suggested that Coligny had inspired it. The assassin himself, who had certainly been employed by the Admiral as a spy, declared that he had killed Guise by Coligny's orders. Coligny himself lent colour to the accusations by giving public expression to his pleasure at Guise's death. "Cette mort," he said, "est le plus grand bien qui pouvoit arriver à ce royaume, à l'église de Dieu, et particulièrement a moy et à toute ma maison." This brutal frankness was remembered when Guise's son compassed the Admiral's murder on Saint Bartholomew's

¹ The assassin was a Huguenot fanatic—Poltrou de Méré.

Eve nine years later. Catherine, who was also suspected of complicity and who was delighted at the removal of so dangerous and overbearing a subject, was wise enough to conceal her pleasure. But with characteristic alertness she made haste to turn the new situation to the profit of the Crown. The death of Guise and the clearance from the board of the whole of the Triumvirs brought her to the zenith of her power : and she returned at once to her old attitude, conciliating the Protestants by the Edict of Amboise (19 March, 1563) which granted a freedom of worship restricted to the houses and domains of the nobility,¹ and united all parties against the English. Le Havre was retaken (30 July) and on 11 April, 1564, Elizabeth signed the Treaty of Troyes by which the English claim on Calais was definitely abandoned. The final recovery of Calais by France must therefore be credited to the much-abused Queen.

It was at this juncture (December, 1563) that the Council of Trent brought its sittings to a close. Its pronouncements amounted to a grave attack on the Gallican position. The French deputation headed by the Cardinal of Lorraine had protested loudly. But after the assassination of his brother the Cardinal had returned to France intent on persuading Catherine to accept the Articles of the Council. Catherine, however, declined to sanction any such infringement of the *Concordat*² which had been the work of her great-uncle Leo X. She stood out for the full Gallican liberties as established by the arrangement of 1516. She then embarked on the restoration of order in the kingdom, introduced great state and gaiety at Court, and in 1565 commenced an exhaustive tour of the provinces. On this tour she had a meeting with her daughter the Queen of Spain and with Philip's famous minister, Alva, at Bayonne (14 June to 2 July, 1565).³ Events in the

¹ This stipulation was of great importance, Protestantism became the religion of aristocrats and ceased altogether to be that of the *menu peuple*.

² *Supra*, p. 9.

³ It has never been proved that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew was planned at Bayonne. Alva, according to Granvelle, talked of "six victims,"

Netherlands were an indication that Protestantism was becoming more and more identified with revolution. The idea was terrible to Catherine. To nurse such a viper in her bosom would indeed be *jouer sa destinée*. She was therefore ready to listen to the councils of repression advocated by the Spaniard. And in truth the French Protestants were more and more confusing politics with religion. They concerted a plot for seizing the King at Meaux.¹ This time they could not plead, as at Amboise, that they were aiming at an obnoxious minister; and on this occasion Catherine's position was quite different to what it had been at the outbreak of the Religious Wars when she would have welcomed such a seizure. Now she was in the plenitude of her power, and the last thing that she desired was the capture of the Court by the Protestants and the tutelage of her son by Coligny. Her sense of absolutism was further affronted by the demand which the Protestants put forward for a States General. It was only by her energy and the protection afforded by the Swiss troops that the Queen succeeded in extricating the Court from Meaux and in reaching Paris (September, 1567).² The Protestants beleaguered Paris with their small force, fought a stout fight with old Montmorency at Saint-Denis (10 November, 1567) in which the latter was killed, but were obliged to withdraw in face of superior numbers. Reinforced, however, by troops from the Palatinate under John Casimir, son of the Elector, Condé returned once more to threaten Paris, and Catherine was obliged to agree to a reaffirmation of the terms of the Edict of Amboise in the Peace of Longjumeau (23 March, 1568), called *la petite paix*.

The Huguenots could claim that this peace was favourable to their cause; but they must have known that it was not in not of a general massacre. "Papiers d'État du Cardinal de Granvelle" (ed. Weiss, 1852), ix. 298.

¹ Bouillon, "Mémoires," in Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. Ser. I, xi. 3; also "La vraye et entière histoire des troubles et choses mémorables avenues tant en France qu'en Flandres et pays circonvoisins depuis l'an 1562," by Lancelot du Voisin, sieur de la Popelinière (1572), i. 41-2, etc.

² Davila, "Histoire des Guerres Civiles" (1757), 247 *sqq.*

tended for a settlement. The Court was thoroughly aroused by their revolutionary attitude and Catherine might be reckoned as a bitter foe. A fierce campaign of propaganda and repression was opened, and in September Catherine concerted with the Cardinal of Lorraine an attempt to kidnap Condé and Coligny. This enterprise failed, and the Protestant leaders took refuge at la Rochelle, where they concentrated their forces for a renewal of the war. The military leaders of the Catholic party had one by one disappeared (the elder Guise, Saint-André, and Montmorency). A new school now arose. Catherine desired to bring to the front her favourite son, Henry of Anjou, the heir-presumptive to the Crown. She feared that Charles IX might attempt to throw off her ascendancy. He was already showing ominous signs of independence; and she desired to build up a military reputation for his brother by which to overshadow him and so preserve power for herself. Henry of Guise, now eighteen years old and endowed with a full measure of his father's courage and all the pride of his house, became the leader of a band of young daredevils who were continually exceeding and contravening the orders of Anjou and his military adviser, Marshal Tavannes. Thus began the rivalry of the two Henries, which was destined to end so tragically twenty years later in the Château of Blois. The war was a triumph for the Catholics, and redounded to Anjou's credit. The Huguenots were surprised and defeated at Jarnac (13 March, 1569), Condé falling into the hands of the enemy and being treacherously murdered in cold blood by his captors.¹ Condé's son and young Henry of Navarre were proclaimed leaders of the Huguenot party; but the true head of the party was Coligny, who faced the royal forces once more (3 October) on the banks of the Dive at Moncontour, and suffered a crushing defeat after a long and gallant fight.

In spite of this series of defeats there was much sting left in the Huguenots. Coligny withdrew to the south and proceeded to lay waste the entire South-West and in the spring

¹ "Le Tocsain contre les Massacreurs" ("Archives Curieuses," op. cit. VII. 37) says he was killed in cold blood by one Montesquiou of Anjou's guard and by the orders of the latter.

of 1570 advanced by Carcassonne and Nîmes and up the Rhône Valley. He was confronted with a superior royal army at Arnay-le-duc near Châlons on 27 June, but his great mobility enabled him to escape defeat. Meanwhile la Rochelle defied all attack and la Noue prosecuted a successful campaign in the West. Clearly the Catholics had not got to the bottom of the Huguenots. Awakened to this fact, Catherine and the royal family swung rapidly back to the Protestant side. The Huguenots must not be crushed but preserved as a set-off to the House of Guise, whose ascendancy and rivalry with Anjou were extremely distasteful to Catherine. Charles IX was therefore married to Elizabeth, the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian (26 November, 1570), a princess known to be favourable to reform. Anjou himself paid court to the Queen of England. The Treaty of Saint-Germain, condemned with some reason by the Catholics as a disgraceful surrender to the heretics, ended the Third Civil War (8 August, 1570): and it was proposed to marry Margaret of Valois to Navarre, the nominal leader of the Huguenots, instead of to Guise, the real leader of the Catholics. A more complete *volte-face* could hardly have been imagined.

It was at this moment that there took shape in the brain of Coligny a plan for ending the civil discord. It was the very plan which Henry IV afterwards carried to a successful issue; the civil strife was to be transformed into a national strife and the sundered factions united in a common hatred of Spain. Coligny had rightly diagnosed the disease and prescribed the remedy, and he was prepared to risk his life in order to get it administered.¹ The moment was favourable. The King was weary of his subordinate part, impatient of his mother's tutelage, and jealous of his brother's military successes, and, under the influence of Louis of Nassau, was already meditating intervention in the Low Countries. Yet the difficulties were great. The Queen would certainly fight to a finish rather than allow her son to escape from her tutelage; the

¹ "J'aime mieulx," he said, "mourir et estre traîné par les rues de Paris que de recommencer la guerre civile," de Thou, "Mémoires" (Collection Universelle des Mémoires particulières, 1789), LIII. 56.

Guises were ready to betray their country to Spain; the Cardinal did actually warn Philip of the turn things were taking. Above all the excesses of the Protestants, the extravagant claims put forward by a small minority, and the blunt tactlessness of the Admiral himself, who was ill equipped for the delicate part he had set himself to play, jeopardized the success of the new policy. Nevertheless Coligny came to Court and quickly gained considerable influence over Charles IX, who addressed him as "my father," and under his guidance proceeded with the preparations for intervention in the Low Countries.

A force of Rochellais seized Brielles at the mouth of the Meuse, and Montmorency negotiated a defensive alliance with England (20 April, 1572), while in the last days of May Louis of Nassau seized Mons and Valenciennes. It had been arranged that the marriage of Henry of Navarre with the King's sister Margaret should cement the peace between the two religious parties. Jeanne d'Albret came to Court in anticipation of the event. She was ill at ease in such surroundings. "If one wants to get any good here," she wrote on 11 March, 1572, "one must get it by surprise and before anyone thinks of it." The Queen Mother, she added, would only talk to her *en badinant*: "C'est pitié que de cette cour: je m'y fasche extrêmement . . . l'on me gratte, l'on me picque, l'on me flatte, l'on me brave, l'on me veult tirer les vers du nez sans se laisser aller".¹ Again she writes: "They don't believe in the piety of my son; they see he won't make the difficulty about going to Mass that I make".² Did this gall her because she knew it to be true? Amidst these uncongenial surroundings Jeanne d'Albret suddenly died on 9 June, 1572. Catherine was accused of having poisoned her by perfume concealed in a glove. This is improbable, and Tavannes is no doubt right when he says that "anger, the heat, and apprehension in a subtle spirit caused her death without any poison".

Catherine, however, saw that Paris did not deprecate the idea of poison, and began to turn over in her mind the means

¹ Antoine de Bourbon, "Lettres," op. cit. 345 *sqq.*

² *Ibid.* 348.

by which she might get rid of Coligny and recover her influence over the King. There was plenty of justification for her attitude; Europe was lukewarm: Elizabeth had rejected the addresses of both Anjou and Alençon, and had re-established commercial relations with the Low Countries. The Protestant princes of Germany were indifferent, Venice and the Pope protested, and there seemed every probability that if France went to war with Spain she would do so in complete isolation. Coligny's effort to nationalize the religious problem was in fact premature; and, although it is impossible not to admire the courage and directness with which he prosecuted his self-appointed task, it is also impossible not to see that Catherine's opposition was not merely selfish, however unscrupulous the means she employed.

The military failure with which hostilities opened, Genlis being totally defeated in an attempt to reach Mons (17 July), convinced the Queen of the necessity of ridding herself of Coligny. "La jalousie du gouvernement de sa fils brusle la Roynne dehors et dedans, et tient conseil de se défaire de l'admiral." One cannot but admire the finesse with which she went about the terrible business.¹ To allay suspicion the arrangements for the Navarre-Valois marriage were allowed to continue. Navarre had come to Paris on 8 July, and the wedding was celebrated on 18 August on a platform erected in front of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Four days later, as Coligny was crossing the Rue des Fossés Saint-Germain, reading a letter as he walked, two shots were fired from a barred window. He was struck in the left arm and right forefinger. The shots had been fired by a retainer of Guise, probably a man named Maurevel, a sort of professional assassin. He had been employed by Catherine and Anjou to assassinate the Admiral, and the arquebus was one belonging

¹ It has always been a matter of dispute whether the Massacre of St. Bartholomew was premeditated from the time of the interview of Bayonne. That interview proves that Catherine was ready to discuss a *coup*, but proves nothing more. Probably the idea of a general massacre was of gradual growth. But see de Thou, "Histoire Universelle," op. cit. v. 35; Duplessis Mornay, "Mémoires" (1624-5), I. 38 *sqq.*

to Anjou's body-guard.¹ The King was not privy to this plot; he was playing tennis and broke his racket in his anger when he heard the news.² But his suspicions fell on Guise and not on his mother and brother,³ whom he took with him when he went on the following day to pay a visit of condolence to the wounded man. Catherine was never so frightened in her life, but all the same she was brutal enough to remark to the Admiral that "in Guise's case they had not been able to extract the bullet".

The plot had failed and the King was still under the domination of Coligny. Power was slipping from Catherine's grasp. Under these circumstances she at last determined to take a step which had long been talked of—a general massacre of Huguenots, in which the Admiral, of course, would be a prominent victim. She was willing, that is, to take for her own selfish ends, a step for which the only possible excuse was religious fanaticism. Her masterstroke was the capture of the King to her plan. She knew every shade of his vicious character and played on him as on a musical instrument.⁴ She convinced him first of the existence of a Huguenot plot; and avowed her complicity in the attempted assassination of the Admiral. Remembering that *vice d'humeur colérique* which was the most dangerous trait in his character, she goaded him with the taunt that he was afraid of the Huguenots: "Vous avez donc peur des Huguenots". Touched on his weakest point, the wretched King gave way to that kind

¹ d'Aubigné, op. cit. III. 305-6; "Mémoires de Saint-Auban" (in Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. I, x.), 497 *sqq.* Saint-Auban was with Coligny when he was wounded.

² *Ibid.* III. 307.

³ Cp. "Archives Curieuses," op. cit. VII. 46, where it is stated that he never ceased to heap favours on Guise.

⁴ DATES.—Mon. Aug. 18 1572—The Navarre-Valois Marriage.

Tues.	„	19	„	Fêtes.
Wed.	„	20	„	Fêtes.
Thurs.	„	21	„	Morning. The attempt on Coligny's life.
Fri.	„	22	„	Afternoon. The King visits Coligny.
Sat.	„	23	„	The Queen talks the King over.
Sun.	„	24	„	Massacre.

of madness of rage to which he was subject.¹ Leaping suddenly from one extreme to the other, "Kill them," he cried, "but kill them all, so that not one may remain to reproach me for my treachery, and by God's death" (he was a great swearer)² "give the order promptly". A few hours later he was firing with his own hands on the fugitives from the windows of the Louvre.³ Two years later he died from the effects of the horrors to which, under these influences, he had given his sanction. The fatal words were hardly out of Charles' mouth when the Queen Mother gave the order for the massacre. There was reason for haste lest the King should waver and retract. Guise was entrusted with the superintendence of the matter. He was not likely to hesitate. "The stag," he said, "is in the toils; it must not be allowed to escape. Here are honour and profit cheap (*à bon marché*) and the means of doing without peril what so much bloodshed has not been able to effect."⁴

Catherine, Charles, and Henry (Anjou) awaited the fatal dawn in the embrasure of a window of the Louvre. At one moment they repented and an order was sent to Guise to

¹ The most remarkable account of the preliminaries of the massacre is the "Discours du Roi Henri Troisième à un personnage d'honneur et de qualité estant près de sa majesté à Cracovie; des Causes et motifs de la Saint Barthèlemey" (Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. I, xi. 259). It is supposed to be the work of Miron, physician to the royal household. Its authenticity, however, is not unquestioned. See also Michieli in Baschet, "Diplomatie Vénétienne" (1862), p. 522; and "Memoirs of Margaret of Valois". The most vivid account, however, is that of Tavannes.

² See "Mémoires" of Bouillon. Bouillon asserts that Charles was carefully taught to swear, and that he reckoned it a sign of courage.

³ This incident has been the subject of much controversy. D'Aubigné, "Histoire Universelle," op. cit. III. 333, speaks of the King who "giboyoit de la fenestre du Louvre aux passans trop tardifs à noyer". The balance of the evidence goes to prove the truth of the story; though the window generally pointed out cannot be the one from which the King fired. The whole incident is quite in keeping with the state of the wretched King's mind. See articles in "Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme français," also, Bordier "le Saint Barthèlemey"; and cp. Loiseleur, "Trois énigmes historiques (1882)"; also Brantôme, "Hommes Illustres," 88. Alva lent his weight to the story.

⁴ d'Aubigné, "Histoire Universelle," op. cit. III. 313-4.

suspend operations. It was too late. The silence was broken by a pistol shot, followed by the ringing of the bell of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, beside the palace. Soon the news came that Guise had killed Coligny. The Duke had reserved for himself the gratification of "avenging his father's murder". The body of the Admiral was flung from a window for Guise to make sure that it was indeed his. After that the massacre became general. At least 1000 persons perished in Paris, and in the provinces probably between 10,000 and 20,000.¹ The King sent for Condé and Navarre and ordered them to recant on pain of instant death. Both princes saved their lives by accepting the Mass.²

After the bloodshed had continued an entire day, its instigators themselves had a revulsion of feeling. "La colère rafroidie, le peril passé, l'acte paroist plus grand, plus formidable, aux esprits rassis, le sang espandu blesse les consciences," so says one who participated in the massacre. Catherine feared that she had gone too far; she was ready with her scapegoat and began to throw the blame on the Guises. She was quite mistaken. Public opinion, at least in Paris, was entirely with the massacrers. When she saw this Catherine at once changed her front, and the King went to the *Parlement* and publicly avowed his responsibility. The attitude of the Court indeed was cynical in the extreme. To England they spoke of a diabolical plot against the Crown nipped in the bud by the massacre;³ to the Pope and the King of Spain they paraded the massacre as a deliberate and long-planned act of policy. As to the responsibility, the King was consenting, but his mental balance was peculiar, and in any case he was a tool in the hands of his mother: his whole conduct during the crisis is that of a half-witted boy. Catherine and her son Henry on the other hand had their wits about them and could not plead the excuse of either fear

¹ But see Acton, "Lectures on Modern Hist." (1906), 162.

² d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* III. 326.

³ A great deal was made of this idea of a Huguenot plot. See "Archives Curieuses," *op. cit.* VII. 162 and 251. There is no proof of the existence of any such plot.

or anger or fanaticism. They had acted with cold-blooded calculation, and, in order to preserve power in their own hands, had lightly sacrificed thousands of lives. We must be careful, however, not to judge an event like the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew too much from a modern stand-point. To condemn it as ghastly and inhuman is to condemn the whole spirit of the sixteenth century, the whole attitude of the Catholic Church.¹

A massacre of Protestants had long been held up to the rulers of France as a desirable consummation both by Philip of Spain and by the Pope, who struck a medal to commemorate it. It had long been expected and desired in orthodox quarters. From their point of view Catherine was to blame not for carrying out the massacre but for postponing it. Except amongst a few humane and enlightened Catholics like de Thou,² French public opinion approved the deed; except amongst the Protestant powers, European public opinion endorsed it. "Not a child has been spared," said the Spanish envoy, "blessed be God." On the other hand, so far as the destruction of the Huguenot party was concerned, the massacre was a complete failure. Two years later the broken cause attained its zenith at the Peace of Monsieur. In point of fact the massacre had been a political far more than a religious event—a triumph above all for Spain, freeing her as it did from the war which during the ascendancy of Coligny had been so imminent. It was a political triumph too for Catherine and for Guise; and it was jealousy at the ascendancy of the house of Guise, rather than any religious revival, that now raised the Protestant cause from the dust. Moderate Catholics were thrown into alliance with the Huguenots for political rather than religious reasons. In this way came into being the party which was in the end to be the means of bringing the religious wars to a conclusion. The *Politiques*, as they were called, were Gallican in their religious views and desired the supremacy of

¹ Acton, "History of Freedom" (1907), op. cit. p. 101.

² de Thou used to quote in allusion to the St. Bartholomew: "Excidat illa dies ævo nec postera credant sæcula: nos certè taceamus" ("Archives Curieuses," op. cit. vii. 533).

the State over the Church, desired also the humiliation of Spain. They were royalists, therefore, and were recruited largely amongst lawyers and scholars. "It was they who terminated the wars of religion, the League, and the Revolution, and prepared the great period of the Bourbon Kings."

The war that followed (the fourth of the Religious Wars) was one of sieges. The royal troops found themselves held at bay by the stout walls of la Rochelle, the "maritime Geneva". It was before la Rochelle that the moderate Catholics or *Politiques* began first to draw towards the Huguenots, and Francis of Alençon, the King's youngest brother, became the centre of intrigue. La Noue and Montmorency began to look to him as their leader. The siege was brought to an end by the election of Anjou to the throne of Poland (July),¹ Sancerre however had fallen to the Catholics (August). The Edict of Boulogne (July, 1573) by which liberty of conscience and worship was accorded to the cities of la Rochelle, Nîmes, and Montauban, and liberty of conscience only elsewhere, though a relapse from previous conditions, was a proof that Protestantism was still a force which had to be reckoned with. Alençon was now recognized as leader of the new party, but Catherine, keeping her head in this crisis, arrested the chiefs of the *Politiques*. In the spring of 1574, however, the death of Charles IX, who had never recovered from the strain and excitement of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, altered the situation.²

HENRY III (1574-1589)

Anjou now inherited the Crown. We know him already as the hero of the Third Civil War, and the chief accomplice of his mother, whose favourite he was, in the affair of St. Bartholomew. We might legitimately expect some force of character from a man of such antecedents. But for whatever reason, most probably from ill-health, he quickly lost his

¹ An elaborate account of the negotiations which led to the election of Henry of Valois to the throne of Poland may be found in the "Mémoires of Jean Choinin" (Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. I, xi.), 375 *sqq.*

² Palma Cayet, op. cit. 168.

virility of character, although the worst accusations against him are probably inventions of his enemies. While Henry was making his way from Poland, Catherine had to deal with the increasingly menacing combination between the *Politiques* and the Huguenots. Alençon, Navarre, and Montmorency were in her hands, but there was still la Noue in the West and Damville, son of Constable Montmorency, in the South, the former a typical Huguenot and the latter a typical *Politique*. Damville entrenched himself in Montpellier and took the extreme and revolutionary step of summoning on his own authority the Estates of Languedoc.

Catherine would have been wise to treat with the new party. The growth of the *Politiques* and their gradual fusion with the Huguenots had given a force to the rebels that they had never before enjoyed. It is probable that at that moment the *Politiques* could have been detached from the Huguenots if judicious concessions had been made. Catherine misjudged the situation and believed that the enemy could be easily crushed. Perhaps she counted on the military prowess of the victor of Jarnac and Moncontour. If so, she was relying on a broken reed. His constitutional feebleness quickly displayed itself, and the campaign against Damville ended in complete failure. Guerilla warfare sprang up in every direction. Alençon escaped and joined the malcontents. The scourge of foreign invasion was added to that of civil war. Condé and John Casimir, son of the Elector Palatine, invaded France with 20,000 men. Above all, the attitude of the Guises was alarming, and it became necessary to trim the scales against them once more. Under these circumstances there was nothing for it but to negotiate, and on 6 May, 1576, was signed the Peace of Monsieur, so called after Alençon. Henry III apologized for the massacre; the exercise of the Protestant religion was authorized "par toutes les villes et lieux du royaume . . . sans aucunes restrictions de temps et de personnes". Eight "cities of refuge" (*places de sûretés*) were accorded to the Huguenots. Liberty of worship was forbidden in Paris and wherever the Court was; *Chambres mi-parties* (i.e. half Catholic, half Protestant) were set up in each *Parlement*. The *Politiques* were

pardoned and the prisoners released : Damville retained the governorship of Languedoc : Henry of Navarre became Governor of Guyenne, Condé of Picardy, an out-and-out Catholic district ; Alençon of Anjou, Touraine, and Berry in addition to his apanages.

This capitulation to the united forces of Protestantism and moderate Catholicism decided the ultra-Catholics to act for themselves and brought the celebrated "League" into being. The origin of this body was purely provincial. Already there existed numerous associations in different parts of the kingdom for the promotion of the interests of Catholicism ; and Guise, backed as he was by the Parisian democracy and supported by Philip of Spain (who gave a million crowns in spite of the fact that he had just gone bankrupt), was able to unite these associations into a single great organization. Guise was now undoubtedly aiming at the Crown ; and the weapon thus forged was directed at the King even more than at the Huguenots. Thus on both sides the religious element was becoming subordinated to the political ; and if Guise hoped to carry the extreme Catholics with him by his orthodoxy, he also hoped to carry the populace by his democratic attitude.¹ The bad government of Henry III moreover, and the degraded morals of the Court which were carefully exaggerated by the agents of the League, the truckling to Protestantism in the Peace of Monsieur, disgusted the Catholic public. Guise claimed a descent from Charlemagne and had immense material resources. Above all he was the champion of the faith which was that of the vast majority of Frenchmen. Would the fact that he was relying on foreign help outweigh all these undoubted advantages ? Would patriotism awake and assert its superior claim over religion and popularity and democratic aspirations ? That alone could save France ; and for the moment there was little sign of any such development.

The States General which met at Blois in November,

¹ The legate Gaetani in his journey to Paris, saw so many portraits of Guise everywhere (especially at Troyes), "qu'il est impossible d'ex-primer un plus grand amour" (l'Épinois "La Ligue et les Papes," 1886, 375).

1576, contained but one Huguenot deputy and were dominated by Guise. Under his influence they advanced considerable constitutional demands and at the same time, under the same influence, refused the grants of money which the King required. But they failed to take the one step that would have secured them a real constitutional position—to wit, the union of the three orders, and re-endorsed the old and fatal formula, “*Les deux ordres ne lient le tiers*”.¹ It was Guise’s object to make the fresh war against the Huguenots, which had ensued on the Peace of Monsieur, a failure. And in this he was entirely successful; for the Peace of Bergerac (17 September, 1577), which Henry, after very brief hostilities, was now, for want of funds, constrained to sign, although it somewhat modified the concessions of the previous peace, was in no sense a settlement of the religious struggle. By the Edict of Poitiers, which confirmed the Peace of Bergerac, liberty of worship was restricted to the *faubourgs* of one town in each *baillage* and extended to all the cities which enjoyed the privileges at the last outbreak of hostilities, and which remained in the hands of the Huguenots on 17 September. The forbidden zone round Paris was widened. The *places de sûreté* were to stand for another six years. Half the *chambres mi-parties* were abolished, and the remainder reduced to one-third.

The Huguenots, strengthened as they were by the accession of the *Politiques*, were too powerful to rest content with such a settlement as this, and the struggle continued. The total demoralization of the Court was reflected in the anarchy of the Provinces. Catherine made a progress through the disaffected districts of the South (October, 1578, to June, 1579) and concluded a temporary accommodation (the Treaty of Nerac) with the Estates of Languedoc (28 February, 1579). But in 1579-80 Henry of Navarre raised the South, surprised la Fère (29 November, 1579) and took Cahors (May, 1580); the Peace of Fleix which followed (26 November, 1580) was of a partial and temporary nature, on the lines of the Treaty

¹ Picot, “*Histoire des États Généraux*” (1872), II. 355; Hanotaux, Richelieu,” op. cit. I. 374.

of Bergerac. The ambitions of Alençon, now Duke of Anjou, who aspired to and very nearly acquired a kingdom in the Netherlands and who had renewed his offer for Elizabeth's hand,¹ created great difficulties during this period ; for open war with Spain, which the success of this design would probably have provoked, was to be avoided at all costs. Coligny's old policy in Anjou's hands was grotesque. He was quite unfitted for the task and was easily disposed of by the Duke of Parma.

It was during the dismal period which succeeded the Peace of Bergerac that Guise, who had long leant to a greater or less extent on Spanish help, drifted into the position of a definite pensioner of Philip II.² The most that can be said in excuse is that he did not intend to be the means of placing a Spanish princess on the throne of France. He hoped rather to finance his own schemes with Spanish money. Thus he became doubly a traitor, to France on the one hand and to Spain on the other. His plan, which he developed in conjunction with Don John of Austria, the illegitimate son of Charles V, with whom he shared the adulation of the Catholic world, was elaborate and chimerical. It was based on the idea of cutting out for Don John a great Catholic kingdom in the North, which should comprise England, where he was to restore the Catholic faith, Scotland, whose Queen he was to marry, and the Netherlands, which could be ruled with greater ease from St. James' than from the Escorial. Guise was to profit by the upheaval thus caused to establish in his own person a genuinely Catholic dynasty in France. The King of Spain's money would be useful for this purpose as long as that monarch remained blind to the true goal of

¹ He went to England in August, 1579, and was fondled by Elizabeth who called him "her frog," and in 1581 even slipped a ring on his finger.

² For proof that Guise was sold to Spain see de Croze, "Les Guises et les Valois" (1866), appendices; Forneron, "Philippe II" (1881-2), III. 226. During the six last years of his life he received 500,000 crowns, especially in 1587 and 1588. Since 1581 Guise had figured in the Spanish correspondence as a secret agent under the name of "Hercules". After April, 1584, he becomes "Mucius". See also l'Épinois, "la Ligue et les Papes," *op. cit.* p. 32.

Guise's ambitions and to the fact that he was being used as a mere catspaw.

It was in 1578 that the Duke first began to receive definite payment for information supplied to Philip II ; and very soon he was in receipt of a definite wage of 200,000 *livres*. His letters to Philip exist in large numbers in the *Archives Nationales* to prove his treachery. As much of the money as he could spare from his own private requirements, which were very large, he devoted to the raising of an army for the execution of his designs. In 1579 this army was all ready to embark for Scotland. But the sudden death of Don John brought things to a standstill. Guise rendered unwilling help to Philip in the Netherlands, but it was not with that object that he had raised the troops, and so little was his heart in the matter that he was easily kept in check by Anjou. The whole sordid story would be unimportant, but for the light that it throws on the ambitions of the Duke of Guise. However much we may disapprove of the means which Henry III in the end employed to rid himself of his enemy, it must be acknowledged that he was justified in regarding him as a double-dyed traitor. Legal execution, however, and not murder is the right end for a traitor.

In 1584 the situation was altered by the death of Anjou (10 June). This event made Henry of Navarre heir-presumptive to the throne of France. After his escape at the St. Bartholomew, Henry had remained a dependant at the Court of Charles IX and subsequently at that of Henry III. No one had as yet recognized his force of character. He had lived submissively as a client, had played tennis with Guise, and made himself agreeable to all. In January, 1576, however, he had effected his escape and, having abjured the Catholic faith which he had accepted under such tragic circumstances, had been received by the Huguenots within the walls of la Rochelle. His escape did much to reconcile and cement the forces of the Huguenots and moderate Catholics. It also roused the League to redoubled activity. It was necessary to produce another claimant to the succession. One's first feeling is surprise that Guise was not put forward. But the

flaw in his position was that the only money he could command was in the form of Spanish doubloons, and this he would only continue to receive so long as he remained the faithful agent of Philip II: the moment he advanced a claim of his own the payment would cease. So the Duke was obliged to countenance the claim of Anthony of Navarre's brother, the Cardinal of Bourbon, who was put forward against his own nephew as the candidate of the League. Both his age and his cloth forbade his founding a dynasty. He was an obvious stopgap.¹

Guise now hoped to realize his ambitions not by civil war but by making himself the leader of a great Spanish-Catholic Crusade against England. Philip, however, who was paying him, did not require him as a leader of invasion abroad but as a leader of faction at home. He hung back from the Catholic Crusade which the Duke advocated. Perhaps he foresaw that in the glory of such an invasion Guise might transfer to himself the leadership of the Catholic world. It was only when he found that Philip would not consider such a plan that Guise reluctantly agreed to accept the inferior rôle for which Philip had cast him. He assembled the Leaguers at Joinville, and in the name of the King of Spain issued an ultimatum to Henry III in which the claims of the Cardinal of Bourbon were put forward (31 December, 1584). On 30 March this was followed by a manifesto of the League which savoured more of social discontent than of religious enthusiasm, and to which Henry III replied in April, vindicating his enthusiasm for the cause of religion, and throwing the blame for the failure of his arms to reduce the Huguenots to terms on the parsimony of the recent States General. Henry III was ill-fitted to cope with the League led by Guise. He was becoming more and more morbid and effeminate; spent his time in inventing marvellous ruffs for his own use, in collecting little dogs, and in dancing. Catherine, however, was much more a match for the Leaguers, and when they took arms she intervened, and by her mediation on 7 July, 1585, was signed

¹ For Genealogical Tables of families of Navarre and Guise, *infra*, p. 86, and *supra*, p. 31.

the Treaty of Nemours which pronounced penalties upon the Huguenots so severe that half of Henry of Navarre's moustache is said to have turned white when he read it.

Henry III had been captured by the League ; but in the War of the Three Henries which ensued he was by no means anxious for the success of his nominal allies, and indeed did his utmost to thwart Guise's designs. Catherine made a hopeless attempt to win Navarre to Catholicism ; an event which would have completely taken the wind out of the sails of the League. But Navarre knew that his only real strength lay in the Huguenots, and that he could hope to secure the succession by their support alone. Henry III now began to work for the failure of the campaign. He sent Guise off to guard the frontier against the foreign *armée de secours* which was coming to the support of the Huguenots, while he told off Joyeuse, one of his new favourites, to deal with the King of Navarre. There can be little doubt that he would have welcomed the defeat of both his generals. Navarre won a splendid victory over Joyeuse at Coutras (20 October, 1587). Was a like fate in store for his colleague ? Unfortunately for Henry III, Guise was able to defeat the *armée de secours* in two successive engagements, and could come forward once more in the rôle, so familiar to his family, of special protector of Paris. All that Henry III could do was to deprive his rival of a fuller triumph by coming to terms with the invaders. This, though it disappointed Guise also, had the effect of further discrediting the King.

Matters between Henry of Guise and Henry of Valois were now coming to a head. The Duke had Paris with him ; and in spite of the fact that he disliked the "Sixteen"—the revolutionary Assembly which had begun to sit with a representative from each quarter of Paris—and that his soldier's soul revolted at the idea of relying on the assistance of a mob, he proceeded by means of the League to work upon the feeling of the Capital. Henry III was held up to execration as a false Catholic who had permitted the execution of his own sister-in-law (Mary Queen of Scots had been executed on November, 1587), and an evil King who had betrayed his country

to the foreigner, and his religion to the heretic. Philip II now undertook to avenge Mary ; but he was still unwilling to entertain the idea of entrusting to Guise the task of invading England, and the Duke had to be content when the Spanish Armada sailed, to play the subordinate part of firebrand in France so that the invasion might be carried out without fear of French intervention. The Spanish doubloons coming regularly in, Guise accepted the ignominious position, and, placing himself entirely in the hands of his Spanish patron, awaited the signal to act. May was the month fixed for the Armada, and for that month therefore Guise made preparations for a revolt in Paris. But in the anxiety of waiting he seems to have lost his nerve, and in the end he acted with premature haste, so that the plan was ruined. One thing it is well to remember, he was not wholly devoted to the interests of Spain, and he must be regarded as a man playing all the time his own game while ostensibly playing that of his patron. Whatever the reason, he left Soissons quite suddenly on 8 May, and at noon on the following day galloped into Paris¹ where he was greeted with immense enthusiasm by the populace² who cried "Vive Henri! Vive Guise! Vive le pilier de l'Église!"³ The King, who had probably got some suspicion of the unrest in the Capital, had expressly forbidden the Duke to come thither,⁴ and when contrary to these orders Guise flung into the Louvre itself, the situation was fraught with danger. Henry III was at last roused ; his face was haggard we are told, but he regarded the action as a defiance and an insult. "Par la Mort-Dieu, il en mourra," he cried. It was probably the influence of Catherine which saved Guise's

¹ See d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* vii. 209, and l'Estoile, *op. cit.* 136. He actually rode with his face hidden in his cloak, but was soon recognized. This goes to prove that he did not come to stir up strife. See d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* vii. 210, and "Archives Curieuses," *op. cit.* Ser. I, xi.; also de Thou.

² "Mémoires journeaux de Pierre d'Estoile (1876)," iii. 137.

³ d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* vii. 211.

⁴ The message from Henry III forbidding Guise to come to Paris was sent to him on 14 April. De Thou says he implored him in terms unworthy of a king (x. 251).

life.¹ The old Queen hurried from her sick-bed to be present at a situation which seemed likely to demand all the courage, persuasion, and diplomacy of which she was such a mistress. She occupied the enraged King in conversation while the Duke was hurried from the royal presence. It would have been well for Henry's reputation had he struck his rival down now in the act of rebellion. But he was full of indecision and lost his opportunity. Guise returned to the Louvre the next day with 400 men at his back. The King's irresolution "gave to the Duke and the chiefs of sedition the time to recover their spirits".² Taught by the agents of the League, the populace barricaded the streets against the military; and the King was obliged to resort to the humiliating expedient of imploring his rival to save the troops.

Whatever his original design when he came to Paris, Guise had by this time determined to strike at the King. He wrote to the Governor of Orleans, "I have defeated the Swiss, cut in pieces a portion of the King's guards, and hold the Louvre so closely invested that I will give good account of what is within it". This is good evidence that on 13 May Guise regarded the sceptre as already within his grasp.³ The old Queen gauged the situation, and taking her life in her hands descended into the disordered streets. The barricades were opened just sufficiently to allow her litter to pass, but Catherine showed a smiling and confident countenance and allowed nothing to take her aback.⁴ When she reached the Louvre it was to find that Henry had already left the

¹ Guise rode right through Paris from Porte Saint-Antoine to the Filles Répenties where the Queen lived (present Halle aux blés).

Estienne Pasquier (*"Œuvres,"* 1723, II. col. 331, lettre du 20 Mai, 1588) gives perhaps the best account of the "day of Barricades".

² de Thou.

³ Sixtus V when he heard of Guise's arrival in Paris exclaimed: "O! le téméraire! O! l'imprudent! d'aller ainsi se mettre entre les mains d'un Prince qu'il a si vivement outragé!" When he heard of Henry's behaviour he said, "O! le lache prince! O! le pauvre prince! d'avoir laissé ainsi échapper l'occasion de se défaire d'un homme qui semble être né pour le perdre." (De Thou, *op. cit.* x. 266.)

⁴ "Archives Curieuses," *op. cit.* xi. 357.

Palace (at 4 p.m.) and was in the Tuileries, where the royal stables then were—not far from the riding school where another fugitive King of France was to take refuge. He leant on a stove and wept while he waited for his carriage, calling Paris an ungrateful city which he had loved better than his own wife.¹ The Queen's message made him start. He got clear of the city without difficulty, slept that night at Rambouillet,² and reached Chartres on the thirteenth. Frustrated in his designs, Guise set himself to draw the King into the Leaguish policy, so that he might at least destroy the prospects of Navarre and secure to himself the reversion of the Crown. Henry ostensibly fell in with Guise's proposals; signed in July an "Edict of Union" confirming the Treaty of Nemours, received Guise and the Cardinal of Bourbon at Court, raising the former to the rank of General of all his Armies, and recognizing the right of the latter to the succession. Was he, as d'Aubigné suggests, merely drifting ("rouler au jour la journée"), or was he scheming his revenge? "*Mon Cousin*," he said one evening as he dined with the Duke, "let us drink to our good friends the Huguenots." "Well said, Sire," replied Guise; "and to our *bons barricadeux* of Paris," added the King, "do not let us forget them"; and the Duke's laugh stuck in his throat. It was clear that Henry was nursing his grudge.³

Guise and the League were now relying on the States General which the King had summoned to Blois for October. Henry rose to the occasion.⁴ His opening speech was delivered in a ringing voice and its eloquence was universally admitted.⁵ But the Assembly was Leaguish and Guisard to the core, and Guise outshone the King in his coat of white

¹ "Archives Curieuses," op. cit. xi. 390.

² d'Aubigné, op. cit. vii. 215 note.

³ l'Estoile, "Journal," op. cit. iii. 175, ed. 1876.

⁴ See Hanotaux, "Richelieu," op. cit. i. 375; also for the whole of the Estates, d'Aubigné, op. cit. vii. 318 *sqq.*; Simon Goulart, "Mémoires de la Ligue" (ed. 1758), ii. 481; l'Estoile (ed. 1886); and Picot, "Histoire des États Généraux," ii. *passim*.

⁵ l'Estoile, "États de France," iii. 189.

satin (*la cappe retroussée à la bizarre*); his eye searched the room for his adherents, and he even compelled the King to expunge those passages in his speech which offended him. These humiliations, the parsimony of the Estates, and their insistence on a renewal of the Edict of Union galled Henry to the quick. As the days passed the atmosphere became more and more dangerous. There were continual rumours of a contemplated *coup d'état*, which the King quieted by heaping attentions on the Duke, the Cardinal, and the Archbishop of Lyons, the three leaders of the League. Meanwhile he was completing his arrangements for their destruction. He was heartened in his preparations by the news of the defeat of the Armada. So long as that mighty force was above water he could hardly have ventured on violence towards the chief agent in France of the King of Spain.

Henry was no novice in bloodshed. He had been closely concerned in the murder of Condé at the Battle of Jarnac. He had been, next to Catherine, the prime mover in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Why should he hesitate at a further crime and one which should rid him for ever of his most dangerous adversary? "*Homme mort, ne fait plus guerre*,"¹ he was accustomed to say. He was taking steps to put Guise *hors de combat*. The Duke received many warnings of a plot against him, but he probably thought Henry incapable of vigorous action. At any rate he ignored the warnings. The story that in answer to one of them he pencilled on a slip of paper the words *on n'oseroit* is possibly untrue,² but it probably represents the Duke's attitude with sufficient accuracy. Meanwhile Henry was bringing his plot to completion. He ordered his carriage for 4 a.m. on the morning of 22 December on the pretext of a pilgrimage; at that hour he was called, and introduced into the royal apartments a number of his Gascon bodyguards. The Council, of which Guise was a member, had been summoned for 6 a.m. The interval was spent by the King in arming and posting his men and instructing them in their parts. Eight³ were told off for the

¹ l'Estoile, *op. cit.* III. 197.

² *Ibid.* *op. cit.* III. 197.

³ Their names are given in the notes to d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* VII. 389.

actual murder. The pale light of a cheerless winter dawn and the flame from the King's *bougeoir* flickered on the motionless figures of the armed men as Henry—his preparations complete—retired to his cabinet.

In the adjoining chamber men wondered what kept the Duke. It was 8.30 before he appeared. He was lightly clad in a grey satin coat, and, feeling the chill of the rough morning, asked for a fire and some light refreshment. He was given some Brignolles plums of the King's. Then his nose bled and he sent for a pocket handkerchief.¹ The messenger who went for it was not allowed to return. Guise was in a trap. The *maître de requêtes* was droning through a report on *gabelles* when a pale Secretary of State entered and said to the Duke, "Monsieur le roi vous demande dans son vieux cabinet". Pocketing some of the plums and throwing his cloak over his left arm, he swung out of the chamber. The assassins closed round and fell on him as he entered the inner cabinet. Strong man that he was, he dragged some of his assailants with him into the cabinet, and fell at the foot of the royal bed uttering the words *quelle trahison*, or, according to another account, *traître roy*.²

Guise's brother the Cardinal was apprehended in the Council Chamber and put to death on the following day. Catherine, who had overheard the struggle from her death-bed on the floor below, was probably more upset by the independence of the King's action than by its violence or its treachery. Various wise and characteristic comments are attributed to her. "You have killed two men who have left many friends."³ "The merit is not in the way you cut the thread, but in the way you sew it." Palma Cayet asserts that her last advice to her son was that he should reconcile himself to Navarre.⁴ Henry III thought that the removal of the Guises and the disbandment and humiliation of the till lately triumphant Estates, which was its natural corollary, would leave him paramount. "Enfin je suis Roi," he said.⁵ He miscalculated the strength of

¹ "Archives Curieuses," op. cit. XII. 217, and l'Estoile, op. cit. III. 198.

² "Archives Curieuses," op. cit. XII. 218. ³ l'Estoile, op. cit. III. 231.

⁴ Palma Cayet, op. cit. 96.

⁵ de Thou, op. cit. x. 471.

Catholic feeling, especially its strength in the Capital. Henry IV afterwards made a similar miscalculation. Indeed the irreconcilable attitude of Paris is not easy to explain. Perhaps its greatest bond to the Catholic Church was the fact that the clergy had taken up the bulk of the municipal loan, and therefore any attack on the Church was a menace to the finances of the citizens of Paris. The murder of their idol only provoked the Parisians to revolt. Guise's widow was in the city awaiting her *accouchement*. Paris expressed its devotion to her, and the son who was born to her was by request christened "Paris de Lorraine"; all colonels and captains of the city attended the baptismal ceremony with tapers in their hands. Preachers made their congregations swear to live and die "pour la Sainte Union des Catholiques," i.e. for the League. Placards were posted calling the King *vilain Herodes* (an anagram of "Henri de Valois") and adding "nous n'avons plus de Roi". Processions of children thronged the streets carrying lighted candles which they extinguished by stamping on them exclaiming: "Le Roy est hérétique et excommunié". Henry had been excommunicated by the Pope, a proceeding which affected him greatly, and he was only comforted when Navarre reminded him that Charles V had attacked the Pope in Rome itself. The Sorbonne, the highest theological authority in France, released the people from their oath of fealty to Henry and encouraged the populace to rebellion.¹ With this encouragement "Paris prit un nouveau visage". Whoever did not defame the King felt that he ran the risk of his life. It was during this period and by these means that the moral character of Henry III received the blackening from which it never recovered. The large majority of the atrocious vices attributed to him may probably be traced to the professional character-wreckers of the League. The *Parlement* followed

¹ Palma Cayet, op. cit. 88. d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 36. See also "Archives Curieuses," XII. 349, where the "Advis et résolution" of the Sorbonne is printed. "Quod populus hujus regni solutus est liberatus a sacramento fidelitatis et obedientiæ præfato Henrico Regi præstito. Quod idem populus licite et tuta conscientia potest armari, uniri, et pecunias colligere . . . ad defensionem . . . religionis catholicæ apostolicæ et Romanæ adversus nefaria concilia et conatus prædicti Regis," etc.

the lead of the Sorbonne. The murdered Duke's brother, the Duke of Mayenne, who had been at Lyons at the moment of the assassination,¹ was made Lieutenant-General and preparations were made for open rebellion.

Henry III, therefore, made a fatal mistake in thinking as soon as he saw Guise dead "that he had no other enemy in the world".² Instead of waiting to gloat over his treacherous deed he should have got on his horse, asserted himself as master in his own kingdom, and so struck terror among the malcontents. Having set the whole of Catholic France against him there was now only one thing for the King to do, and that was to throw himself upon the support of Protestant France.³ Navarre who had been, and still was, the deadly foe of the Guises was quite willing to meet him. He published on 4 March, 1589, a letter addressed to the Three Estates of France in which he made an eloquent appeal for peace. "Nous avons esté quatre ans yvres insensés et furieux. N'est ce pas assez?" Then he spoke of his love for France. "N'y ayant point de si bon medecin que celuy qui aime le malade."⁴ This appeal to patriotism and unity struck a new note and one which was gradually to dominate. The first step to the unity which he sought he accomplished by coming to terms with the King (3 April). The strife, which had been growing daily more and more political, had now on one side at least ceased to be religious altogether. It had come at last to be royalist against rebel, rather than Huguenot against Catholic. The two Henries met at Plessis⁵ and the crowd at their informal meeting (*sans cérémonie*) in the Park was so great that for a *demi quart heure* they stood within four paces of each other without being able to speak to each other.⁶ Navarre cried tears of joy "as large as peas".⁷

¹ Palma Cayet, op. cit. 90.

² *Ibid.* 108.

³ "Le Roy qui se void en necessité de deux maux se résout d'éviter le pire : il accept le secours du roy de Navarre pour se sauver de la fureur de l'union" (Palma Cayet, op. cit. 131).

⁴ *Ibid.* op. cit. 113, 114.

⁵ *Ibid.* op. cit. 127, 128, and d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 40.

⁶ "Mémoires de la Ligue," op. cit. III. 298 (1758).

⁷ l'Estoile, op. cit. III. 277.

The Kings found themselves at the head of an army of 30,000 men *frais, sains, et bien armés*.¹ But even with so fine a force Henry's advisers counselled him against besieging Paris. It was then that it became clear that the royal army had not only swollen in numbers, but had also acquired a brilliant leader in the King of Navarre. "Donnoit l'esperon à tous." He argued that Paris was the magnet which should draw all the steel in France to the royal army. Courage, he added, was the mother of confidence, and confidence of strength, strength of victories. He carried the King of France with him, and by 30 July Henry III was at Saint-Cloud and Henry of Navarre at Meudon. The leaguer of Paris was imminent.

The excitement in the Capital was intense. The danger was extreme, for Mayenne's forces were inadequate to meet those of the two Henries. But the campaign of scandal had done its work. The feeling against Henry III was profound, and amongst those who had been most affected by the preaching and libelling, was a certain half crazy friar named Jacques Clément. He was worked up to believe that the murder of such a man would be a meritorious act. Means were taken to secure him an interview with Henry at Saint-Cloud. On the pretext that he had something of a private nature to communicate, he managed to get his opportunity and thrust a knife into Henry's stomach. The King died of the wound the following day, and with him perished the house of Valois.

Clément's act in the end gave the Crown to a heretic; but he won it only by the adherence of loyalists who were willing to subordinate their ecclesiastical to their political ideals.

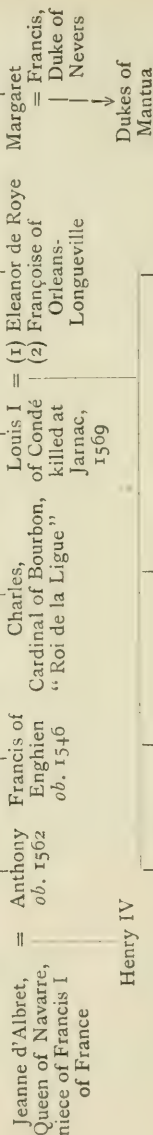
¹ d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* VIII. 70.

HOUSE OF BOURBON

Louis I of Bourbon,
grandson of
Louis IX
(1310-1341)

The direct male line of the elder branch ends with Charles, Duke of Bourbon, Constable of France, who was killed at the sack of Rome, 1527. From the Constable's sister sprang the Montpensier branch.

His grandson John marries the heiress of Vendôme and founds the cadet branch of Vendôme; John's great-great-grandson is Charles, Duke of Vendôme



Louis II, Prince of Condé (The great Condé), ob. 1686

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CHAPTER XXI

HENRY IV

(1589-1610)

HENRY of Navarre, who by the death of Henry III became the legitimate claimant of the throne, is already a familiar figure in these pages. We know how, by the death of his unworthy father at the siege of Rouen, he had been thrown under the care of his maternal grandfather and had learnt from old d'Albret what it was to be hardy, self-reliant and poor. He was brought up not amid the luxuries of a court but *comme à la rustique*, bare-headed¹ and bare-footed, in all the rigours of a highland home. We have seen him, the titular leader of the Huguenots, sharing their campaigns. His reconciliation to the Crown drew him to Paris, and six days before the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew he had been married to the sister of Charles IX, afterwards the disreputable "Queen Margot". Torn from his marriage-bed to be confronted with the frenzied King, and, while the air resounded with the death-cries of his co-religionists, threatened with instant death unless he abjured his religion, he had learnt something of the vicissitudes of fortune. He had also learnt a certain facility in religious matters which was ultimately to stand him in good stead. A humble pensioner at Court, he had acquired there the virtues of patience and submissiveness. His escape from Court (3 February, 1576) had enabled him to identify himself with the Huguenots once more. The first of his long series of military successes was the Battle of Coutras, the most conspicuous feat of arms in the "War of the Three Henries". His reconciliation and alliance with Henry III after the death of the heir-presumptive had given him the

¹ Palma Cayet, *op. cit.* p. 167.

position of recognized heir, and the tragic death of that monarch now made him the legitimate claimant of the throne.

Hardiness, facility, and patience he had learnt in his youth; and he was richly endowed with the royal virtues. His domestic life, it is true, was discreditable, but it is difficult for us to appreciate the sixteenth-century standpoint in these matters. A very cursory dip into Brantôme or Montaigne will show us that Henry was no worse than his contemporaries. How far laxity at Court was responsible for the low tone of the morals of the period is another matter. His relations with his two wives were peculiar, and he himself described matrimony as a "condition which he greatly apprehended". However this may be, it is impossible not to blame him for allowing his domestic affairs to influence public policy. He was only prevented from marrying his charming mistress Gabrielle d'Estrées by her timely death, and soon after he made a foolish contract of marriage with Henriette d'Entragues which led to dangerous complications. The end of his life was clouded by his violent passion for the Princess of Condé, which he certainly allowed to affect his political judgment.¹

But he had a royal bearing, a charm of manner and speech which attracted men, and a happy faculty for saying the right thing at the right moment. His manifestos during the time when he was still fighting for his crown set forth the truths of an involved situation with extraordinary incisiveness. His quickness of intellect was remarkable; often he made his reply before his questioner had finished speaking, and his mind worked faster even than his eyes.² Without loss of dignity he was able to unbend and to resolve himself into the boisterous laughter-loving Béarnais; but his sense of humour never obscured his sense of fitness. His gaiety stood him in

¹ "Ne voulait perdre de bataille ni contre les femmes ni contre les hommes."

² The quickness of his intellect is noted both by d'Aubigné and by Sully. The former (*op. cit.* VIII, 322) had often heard him give a good answer to a question before it had actually been propounded. ("Aller au devant des demandes sans se tromper.") See also Sully, "Sages et Royales Œconomies" (ed. Michaud et Poujoulat, *op. cit.*) Ser. II, III. (2), 11.

good stead. "He imparted it to his comrades and his captains imitated him from complaisance and emulation."¹ Many an awkward situation was carried off with a laugh and a humorous sally. He was an indefatigable worker, apparently impervious to bodily fatigue; pre-eminently also one who leapt at conclusions. He was a man of the fields rather than of the Council Chamber, of the chase rather than the Court. His charming letters to Sully from Chantilly give us the picture of a man delighting in life in the open air. "Ici il fait très-beau et y passe bien mon temps . . . vous le jugerez ainsi à mon visage qui est très bon. Je me couche entre dix et onze et me lève à sept heures; dors bien et mange de mesme qui sont les meilleures nouvelles que je vous puis mander."² But he never allowed his pleasures to interfere with the business of State. As a military leader he was admirable,³ endowed with a gallantry and a readiness to take the risks of war which went far to guarantee his success against all except the very greatest commanders, such as Parma. And he had what was perhaps even more valuable to him than courage or military skill—a gallant bearing which caught the eye and touched the imagination.⁴ Read in Palma Cayet⁵ the account of his appearance on the occasion of his first meeting with Henry III, after their reconciliation at Plessis. "He alone wore cloak and plume; all wore the white scarf, and he clad as a soldier, his pourpoint all worn . . . by the weight of his cuirass; his breeches of velvet *feuille morte*, scarlet cloak and grey cap with a great white plume where there was a very fine brooch." This is the portrait of a man who knew the value of appearance. Or turn to a later picture, the crisis of

¹ d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 323.
de Henri IV" (ed. Berger de Xivrey, 1843-76), VI. 373.

² "Recuril des lettres missives
³ He had one *maxime de guerre* worthy of the great Napoleon. "Il se faloit bien garder de croire que l'ennemi eust mis ordre à ce qu'il devoit et qu'un bon capitaine devoit essayer les deffauts en les tastant" (d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 324).

⁴ "Faisoit part aux siens de sa gayeté et ses capitaines le contrefaysoient par complaisance et par émulation" (d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 323).

⁵ Op. cit. p. 128.

the Battle of Ivry, where he turned to his troop with the memorable words: "Mes compagnons, Dieu est pour nous, voici ses ennemis et les notres, voici vostre roy. Si vos cornettes vous manquent ralliez vous à mon panache blanc, vous le trouverez au chemin de la victoire et de l'honneur."¹ Here is one who knew the value of imagination. Perhaps it was the glamour of this noble military figure, *un Roi à cheval*, which assured Henry of his people's affections. But he was not wanting in deeper things. It is clear that, even when he was no more than the leader of a party, he had a real love of France and a real desire to spare her as much as he could the miseries of war. He was the last of the Kings of France to live on terms of sympathetic intimacy with his humbler subjects: and after he came to the throne he devoted a large share of his energies to the task of increasing the material prosperity of the country. He could tell his minister with truth that "he would rather leave mistresses, loves, dogs, birds, games, cards, gaming-houses, buildings, feasts, banquets, and all other pleasures and pastimes than lose the least opportunity of acquiring honour and glory; of which the principles . . . are to have myself held for a loyal prince in faith and word, and to do deeds to the end of my days which will perpetuate them and crown them with glory and honour . . . of which you must not doubt that I think more often than of all my diversions above mentioned".² Here was a man not without the grand ideals of kingship, and taking him all in all, his life bore out the truth of his statement.

The death of Henry III, which had been greeted in Paris with *éclats d'une incomparable gayeté*,³ was in reality a disaster to the League, who were deprived by the event of an admirable target for their sermons, pamphlets, and placards.⁴ The attempt to develop a similar campaign of libel against "Navarre" fell quite flat. Moreover, the blood feud between the house of Guise and the house of Valois ceased with the death of the Valois. "Navarre's" hands were at least not steeped in the blood of the Guises.

¹ d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 189.

² Sully, op. cit. 2, III. 201.

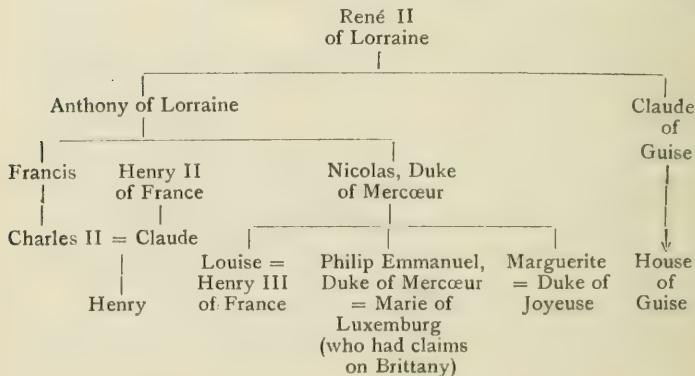
³ d'Aubigné, op. cit. III. 89.

⁴ *Ibid.* op. cit. VIII. 325.

The extreme Catholic party, however, with whom patriotism ranked below piety, continued to declare that under no circumstances could they accept as king a man who had been tainted with heresy. France seemed torn in sunder and the vultures were gathering to the carcass. Chief amongst them were Philip of Spain, who proposed to marry his daughter to a Catholic prince of the blood royal of France, or if necessary to the young Duke of Guise; Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, who, as grandson of Francis I, hoped to revive the Kingdom of Arles in his own favour, and called upon the *Parlement* of Grenoble to recognize him as King:¹ he, however, encountered the vigorous resistance of that hardened Huguenot veteran Lesdiguières, who drove him out of Provence and Dauphiné (1589-90). The house of Lorraine,² moreover, aimed at the very least at Champagne and through a cadet, the Duke of Mercœur (whose wife was a Breton), at Brittany; Henry put forward the house of Turenne-Bouillon to resist the Lorrainers in the East; in Brittany against Mercœur, who was supported by Spain, he sought and got English aid. But the Breton danger was a considerable one.

¹ The *Parlement* was entirely devoted to the League, and would have fallen in with Charles Emmanuel's scheme but for the energy of Lesdiguières.

² THE HOUSE OF LORRAINE (WITH ITS CADET BRANCHES—
MERCŒUR AND GUISE)



Amongst his enemies Henry had also to reckon the Papacy ; Sixtus V, however, gradually came to see that his interests would be better served by the conversion of Henry under his tutelage than by the dismemberment of France or the establishment of an alien dynasty on the throne. The Pope, therefore, became more and more lukewarm in his attitude and soon began to negotiate privately with Henry. Gregory XIV (Nicolo Sfondrati), who became Pope in December, 1590, was, however, a born subject of Philip II, and he reverted to the old attitude and gave assistance to the French irreconcilables. But Clement VIII (Aldobrandini) (1592) feared the ascendancy of Spain, and feared also the establishment of an independent Church in France on English lines.¹ He therefore reopened negotiations with Henry, and, when he found that moderate Catholic opinion in France was only waiting for the King's conversion to range itself by his side, became, as we shall see, the instrument of that conversion.

For a time, at any rate, there was a knot of extremists who held the opposite view, and urged that Henry should be accepted as he stood in spite of his heresy, and to this view for a moment, in the heyday of his first successes, Henry himself seems to have leaned. But the resistance of Paris and the attitude of the moderate Catholic party soon convinced him that a Protestant on the throne of orthodox France would be even more incongruous than a Spaniard ; and showed him that the only way by which he could hope to secure the throne was by concessions to the susceptibilities of moderate Catholics. Moderate Catholics, in fact, were coming round to the view that the political question was of greater importance than the religious. Religious scruples once satisfied by Henry's abjuration, they would respond to the call of patriotism with ardour. The settlement by which in the end the house of Bourbon was accepted in France was at once a

¹ See Davila, "Histoire des guerres civiles" (French trans., ed. 1757), III. 1 *sqq.* "The Pope desired extremely to exclude from the throne the King of Navarre . . . but he did not wish the kingdom to be dismembered . . . still less that it should fall under the domination of a foreign prince."

proof of the strength of religious feeling and a triumph of patriotism over extreme orthodoxy.

Henry was astute enough to see that patriotism would win the day if he would consent to abjure. "J'aurai," he said, "parmi les Catholiques ceux qui aiment la France et l'honneur,"¹ and he was right in his judgment. A section of the nobles at once invited him to adopt this line.² He declined to take any immediate step, averring with justice that he "had been brought up and instructed in a religion which he had up till that time regarded as true, but that he did not wish to persist in it with obstinacy," and that he would "submit to the decision of a General or National Council". On 8 August, therefore, he made a declaration to this effect and undertook to call a council within six months.³ He could hardly have gone farther with dignity or in fairness to the Huguenots. On this understanding a number of the Catholic nobles gave a conditional adherence. But the majority of the great cities, including Paris, and all the *Parlements*, protested. The League proclaimed Henry's uncle, the now aged and always incompetent Cardinal of Bourbon (Duke Anthony's brother), King, as Charles X.⁴ They were dependent on the good-will of their foreign friends, and as Spain, Savoy, Lorraine, and the Papacy would all have disliked the proclamation of Mayenne, that of the Cardinal—an obvious stop-gap—was agreed to.

Henry, who had with him a mere handful of troops, could not stand up to his opponents and withdrew on Dieppe, pursued by Mayenne at the head of an army of about twice the size of his own. The King was at his best in such a crisis. Half-seated on a tottering throne, his purse empty, and his army dwindling, his spirits never fell: "Il s'attachoit tout le

¹ d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 86.

² Davila, op. cit. II. 482. It was the last advice of Henry III to him; it was also the advice of so stout a Protestant as la Noue.

³ Henry's speech of 8 August is reproduced in "Mémoires de la Ligue," op. cit. IV. 34; the promises were renewed at Nantes in April, 1593. See also Davila, op. cit. II. 485.

⁴ d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 149. The Cardinal was at the time a prisoner in Henry's hands.

monde . . . mangeoit en public, laissoit à tout le monde l'entrée libre de ses appartemens, même les plus reculés, sans déguiser la nécessité où il se trouvoit actuellement réduit ; et tournant en plaisanterie tout ce qu'il ne pouvoit terminer sérieusement".¹ He was in fact an ideal leader for a forlorn hope, and in the combats of Arques (16-28 September, 1589) proved himself more than a match for the numerically superior but ill-led forces with which he was confronted. In spite, however, of the valour of the Huguenot veterans he was not strong enough to do more than make a demonstration in front of Paris, where he "put water in the wine of the Sixteen" and "moderated their rigours" by executing some of his prisoners under the walls of the city.² He then retired to Tours.

Elated by his successes and confident of ultimate triumph, Henry now probably hoped to attain the Crown without the ignominy of a recantation. At least he postponed the matter of his conversion, and in so doing went back on his declaration of 4 August. He next proceeded to the reduction of Normandy, his first objective being the besieged city of Dreux, and succeeded in making himself master of the Duchy with the single exception of Rouen. Philip II, who had all the while been secretly assisting Mayenne and the League, now intervened more actively ; but in the Battle of Ivry (14 March, 1590) Henry inflicted a crushing defeat on an army twice the size of his own led by Mayenne. If he could only make himself master of Paris now he might dictate his own terms, finally depart from the declaration of 4 August, and gratify his desire to become a Protestant king.³

The news of Ivry threw Paris into consternation. But, incited by the Catholic preachers, who did not scruple to accuse Henry of every possible crime, the Parisians steeled

¹ Davila, op. cit. II. 489.

² d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 176.

³ "Une preuve miraculeuse de Dieu qui m'a premièrement voulu me donner resolution de les attaquer et puis la grace de la pouvoir si heureusement accomplir. Aussi à Lui seul en est la gloire, et de ce qui en peut par Sa permission appartenir aux hommes elle est due aux princes officiers de la couronne seigneurs et capitaines, et comme je suis grandement content et satisfait j'estime qu'ils le sont de moi" (Extract from a letter of Henry IV on the evening after the battle).

themselves to resistance.¹ In Mayenne's absence his step-brother, Nemours, was appointed Governor of the city. Gaetani, the Papal legate, Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, and Mayenne's sister Catherine, Duchess of Montpensier, rendered able assistance. The defences were strengthened and provisions were hurried in. Famine indeed was the only real danger; for it was clear that Henry with his 12,000 could not hope to carry by storm a fortified city with 220,000 fanatical inhabitants and defended by a garrison of 50,000 men.² An attack on the Faubourg Saint-Martin on 12 May having failed, Henry was obliged to convert the siege into a blockade. He reduced all the surrounding towns, cut off supplies, and waited for events. Paris proved its fanaticism by the constancy with which it bore the privations of the blockade. With one month's provisions it held out for four. But Henry meanwhile was receiving reinforcements from the south and by midsummer was at the head of 25,000 men. Gradually also within the Capital there was forming a party which, offended by the violence of the ultra-Catholics, was ready to sacrifice the religious for the political interest. This party demanded peace, and was fiercely denounced by the ecclesiastical interest, headed by the determined legate³ who adopted an attitude far more extreme than that of the Pope whom he represented.

At last however, in August, Nemours opened negotiations; but Henry, who certainly at this time overrated the chances in his favour, insisted on unconditional surrender. Seeing that everything hung on the question of Paris, Philip II instructed Parma, who was at the moment in command of large Spanish forces in the Netherlands, to proceed to the relief of the city. The famous general executed his mission with consummate skill.⁴ Confining himself to the strict letter of

¹ Davila, *op. cit.* III. 45.

² See d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* VIII. 195.

³ See Article on Gaetani's Mission in "*Revue des questions historiques*" (October, 1881). Lord Acton has told us ("*Lectures*," p. 169) how the last representative of the Gaetani showed him a document setting forth how he had at last paid off the immense debt incurred by the legate in the defence of the city.

⁴ "*Mémoires de la Ligue*," *op. cit.* IV. 324 and 326.

his instructions, he was easily able to draw off Henry's army and so to raise the siege;¹ but he skilfully avoided giving battle and, having revictualled the city, withdrew to the Netherlands. The resistance of Paris was a "miracle of fanaticism"; 13,000 had died of starvation, 30,000 of disease, yet Palma Cayet declares that not more than one-third of Paris was pledged to the League. Here then is an early instance of the tendency of Paris to accept the domination of a violent minority. All Henry's trouble had been wasted; he made a despairing effort to take Paris by *escalade* (9 and 10 September) but to no purpose. His dream of ruling as a Protestant king had been dissipated by the intervention of Parma. No longer able completely to invest the city, he managed to isolate it within a ring of royalist towns, of which the chief was Chartres² (*la nourrice de Paris*): that city capitulated to him on 19 April. A further attempt to enter Paris by treachery was as unsuccessful as the others.

It is clear that by this time there was a noticeable cleavage in the forces of the League. On the one side there was Mayenne who, although willing enough to place the crown upon his own head and if necessary to employ Spanish aid for this purpose, was resolutely opposed to a permanent Spanish domination and still more to the assumption of the crown by the Spanish Infanta. On the other side the "Sixteen," who were now definitely identified with the interests of Spain, and had introduced Spanish troops into Paris and advocated a Spanish Protectorate. The Cardinal of Bourbon, *le Roi de la Ligue*, had died on 9 May, 1590, whereupon the Sorbonne roundly declared that the "Pretender"—even if absolved from his crimes—could not become King of France; a declaration which grievously offended the Pope. The escape, on 15 August, 1591, of the young Duke Charles of Guise, Mayenne's nephew, from Tours where he had been imprisoned, gave them an even more popular figurehead. Not only were the "Sixteen" identified with Spain, but they had in their fanaticism identi-

¹ d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* VIII. 211. See de Thou, *op. cit.* liv. xcix.; "Lettres missives de Henri IV," *op. cit.* III. 245 *sqq.*

² For Siege of Chartres, d'Aubigné, *op. cit.* VIII. 219 *sqq.*

fied themselves also with the most violent and revolutionary schemes, and had even set up a kind of "Terror" and demanded a special tribunal to deal with heretics and the supporters of the "King of Navarre".¹ This contributed in no small degree to the reactionary movement, and all who resented the revolutionary line of the "Sixteen" joined hands with those who from patriotic motives could not endure the domination of Spain. Mayenne, a patriot at heart, disliked the revolutionary trend as much as he disliked the Spanish trend of events. He relied on Paris, on the *Conseil d'État*, and the *Parlement*, and when the "Sixteen" took the extreme step of executing Brisson, the *Premier-President*, and other officials of the *Parlement* (15 November, 1591), he stepped in, seized and hung the ringleaders and threw others of them into prison. Clearly, therefore, there was now a revulsion of feeling in Paris, and a strong moderate party had come into being. "Paris," says d'Aubigné, "out of extremity adopted a new tone, and began to dislike the Spaniards as having played with her. The unavowed royalists who were in the town dared to think and speak in favour of the party which they supported."² The question was, could Henry turn this new feeling to his advantage?

For the moment there was no indication that he could, and he appealed to the Protestant powers—to Elizabeth, to Holland, and to the German Princes—and, reinforced considerably from these quarters, laid siege to Rouen in September, 1591. Once more Parma was sent to the rescue. Henry dashed off with a handful of men to meet him. But the Combat of Aumâle (5 February, 1592) justified the reputation of the famous Spaniard, who by skilful generalship completely outwitted Henry, and in fact repeated the process which had been so successful in raising the siege of Paris. Henry himself was wounded and his troops were routed. It was clear that so long as Parma lived he was Henry's master.³ On 24 Feb-

¹ Davila, op. cit. III. 194.

² d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 218.

³ His premature death at the age of forty-eight on 3 December, 1592, was a godsend to Henry. See d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 404.

ruary the garrison of Rouen made a successful sortie and—the need for relief having thus disappeared—Parma commenced to withdraw into the Netherlands. His second intervention was a fresh proof to Henry of the hopelessness of prosecuting his mission on the lines he had laid down for himself. On 24 May, 1592, a further catastrophe overtook the royal forces at Craon, where Mercœur, with an army almost as much Spanish as French, defeated Conti, the King's Lieutenant-General in the North-West. A set-off for this was the battle of Villemur (on the Tarn) where an army of the League under Joyeuse met with a serious reverse (20 October). Charles Emmanuel and Lesdiguières were still grappling with each other in Provence, Lesdiguières having on the whole the better of it; but nowhere was the royalist ascendancy decisive. Mayenne, however, was also in a difficult position. He feared Philip II, who was now pressing for a States General in the hope of persuading it to recognize the claims of his eldest daughter. Yet he could not afford to dispense with Spanish help. Under these circumstances, while he negotiated with Philip on the one hand, he began to negotiate with Henry on the other. Henry, abandoning the idea of making himself a Protestant King, still adhered to his determination not to consider conversion before he had been acknowledged King. He must be accepted unconditionally. He was not the man to countenance anything that was likely to undermine the principle of hereditary sovereignty. Nor, for the matter of that, was he willing to be *roi fainéant* with Mayenne for mayor of the palace and surrounded by Mayenne's nominees. This indeed from the contrast of characters would have been absurd. Pressed by the Pope, the King of Spain and the "Sixteen,"¹ Mayenne, in January, 1593, consented to summon the States General.² He was not without hope that his candidature would be pleasing to the Pope. Henry was still recalcitrant; public opinion would not countenance the election of a foreigner; Condé's brother, Soissons, was not a serious

¹ Palma Cayet, op. cit. 416.

² Mayenne's proclamation and Henry's counterblast are given at length by Palma Cayet, op. cit. 416.

rival; Parma himself favoured Mayenne: and Mayenne counted much on the genuineness of Henry's Protestantism. If only that were maintained he might reasonably hope for the crown. But to do him justice—fat, good-natured man that he was—¹ he probably really preferred a converted Henry to a dismemberment or a foreign domination. The Estates, sadly dwindled,—the nobles in particular being conspicuous by their absence— assembled after several postponements on 26 January, 1593, in the Salle du Louvre (above the famous hall of the Caryatides), and were duly opened by Mayenne. The Papal Legate gave expression to extreme “Leaguish” feeling when he proposed that they should take an oath never to accept even a converted Navarre. The Spanish ambassador, remarking that they were *au bord de la fosse*² and had to choose between heresy and a foreigner, proposed the Infanta.³ The Duke of Guise, however, was probably the most popular candidate. While the Estates were confronting this brutal dilemma a strong feeling grew up outside the Louvre in favour of a conference with Henry. This feeling was the result of the gradual formation of what may be called a national party. The sentiments of this party found expression in a work, now published under the title of “*Satyre Menippée*,”

¹ See the account of his reconciliation with Henry in Sully. D'Aubigné gives a favourable notice of Mayenne, *op. cit.* viii. 322. “*Courage plus ferme que gaillard, Capitaine excellent*,” but “*estoit incommodé d'une grande masse de corps, qui ne pouvoit supporter ni les armes ni les coursées*”. There is a reference to Mayenne's fidelity in Richelieu's *Memoirs* (Michaud et Poujoulat, Series II, vii. 45). See also Davila, *op. cit.* iii. 11 and 338. Davila believed that Mayenne was honestly opposed to any dismemberment of the kingdom or to its cession to a foreign prince.

² “*l'Espaynol, ayant espérance parmy tant de confusions de se rendre maistre de la couronne françoise, ne songea pas tant à la conquister par le fer et par la force que de l'avoir par la pratique et par intelligences*” (Palma Cayet, *op. cit.* 415).

³ Rott (“*Henri IV; les Suisses et la Haute Italie, 1882*”) argues that Philip II did not seriously entertain the idea of placing the Infanta on the French throne. He wanted to divide France into a number of small states of which he would secure a fair share. Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, a grandson of Francis I, aspired to a cut of France; and Charles II of Lorraine, who had married a daughter of Henry II, aimed at Champagne.

which gave trenchant expression to the new-found patriotism. "Cependant que nous dormons," it said, "nous ne sentons pas qu'on nous coupe pièce à pièce l'un après l'autre et ne restera que le tronc qui perdra bientôt tout le sang et la chaleur et l'asme."¹ The *vieil renard de l'Escurial* is laid bare as the true enemy and a call to unity is sounded. "Allons, monsieur le légat, retournez à Rome," it says: "allons, messieurs les agens et ambassadeurs d'Espagne, nous sommes las de vous servir de gladiateurs à outrance et nous entretuer pour vous donner du plaisir. Allons, messieurs de Lorraine avec votre hardelle de princes . . . nous disons haut et clair . . . que nous sommes François et allons avec les François exposer nostre vie et ce qui nous reste de bien pour assister nostre roy, nostre bon roy, nostre vray roy, qui vous rangera aussi bien tost à la mesme reconnoissance . . . que Dieu vous inspirera, si en estes dignes."²

A national and patriotic party had taken birth at the critical moment, of which the "Satyre Menippée" may be regarded as the manifesto, and the Estates and the rival candidates looked on with horror while this party negotiated with the heretic. A conference took place on 5 May at Suresnes which, in the words of Palma Cayet, "threw the 'Sixteen' and their preachers into a marvellous inquietude".³ Their dismay was completed when they heard that on 17 May Henry had declared himself willing to accept the Catholic Faith. After that it was all over with the intriguers. It was in vain that the Spanish ambassador proposed the marriage of the Infanta to the Duke of Guise, a proposal which was received by Mayenne with a disgust which he made no attempt to conceal.⁴ Public opinion once aroused carried all before it. France, worn out with civil war and roused for the first time

¹ The "Satyre Menippée," dated 1593, only appeared in its completed form in 1594 (see d'Aubigné, op. cit. VIII. 244 and note).

² "Satyre Menippée" (1752), I. 189. See also Duplessis Mornay, "Mémoires," op. cit. I. 102. Qu'on n'oie plus entre nous ces noms de Papistes et de Huguenots: . . . que pour tout il ne soit plus parlé sinon d'Espagnol et de François."

³ Palma Cayet, op. cit. 440.

⁴ de Thou, op. cit. XII. 9.

to a sense of the ignominy of the Spanish domination, greeted the news of the impending conversion with an enthusiasm which incidentally swept away the States General of 1593. Discredited by their seditious origin, they had carried little weight, and are of little importance in the history of States General.

Henry, fearing that the truce which had been arranged might be used by his enemies to secure armed assistance from Spain,¹ showed his teeth by besieging and taking Dreux (8 July), and this convinced Mayenne and those of the extremists who were not bound to Spain of the hopelessness of their position. Spanish aid could not be obtained unless Spanish claims were recognized, and at last they had to choose definitely between their own country and Spain. A general truce was proclaimed on 23 July. Two days later the ceremony of the abjuration took place in the Cathedral of Saint-Denis and the trend of public feeling was proved by the fact that, in spite of orders to the contrary, hundreds of citizens flocked enthusiastically to witness it.² At the door of the cathedral Henry was met by the Archbishop of Bourges. "Who are you?" said the prelate. "I am the King," was the answer. "What do you ask?" "I ask to be received into the bosom of the Church Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman." "Do you wish it?" "Yes, I wish and desire it."³ Then the King knelt and swore to live and die in the said religion and to protect and defend it, renouncing all heresy contrary to its teaching.⁴ He then confessed and received the Communion.⁵

¹ Palma Cayet, *op. cit.* 483, and de Thou, *op. cit.* Vol. XII, liv. CVII.

² de Thou, *op. cit.* XII. 32.

³ The question whether Henry could be absolved by anyone but the Pope was much discussed. On the whole Gallican opinion favoured the admission of Henry into the Church and a subsequent application to the Pope for absolution (*ibid.* *op. cit.* XII. 26).

⁴ Palma Cayet, 496.

⁵ "Mémoires de la Ligue," *op. cit.* v.; "Archives Curieuses," *op. cit.* XIII.; "Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français," XI.-XIII.

Ignoring details for a moment, let us consider what had happened to bring about this happy solution of the problem which had so long divided France. In the intoxication of his early successes Henry had underrated the strength of French Catholicism and had hoped to secure the throne without abjuring his religion or—for that was probably of more account to him—sacrificing his dignity. The resistance of Paris had opened his eyes, and if the forces of Catholicism had been able to present a united front they might even have succeeded in snatching the crown from his grasp. The issue had, however, been complicated by the entrance of the feeling of patriotism into the arena. When the Catholics found that they could only withstand Henry by playing into the hands of Spain, the bulk of them gradually turned once more to Henry and offered to secure him on the throne if only he would accept the true faith. Henry with his practical sense saw that this was the only way out of the impasse.

When the Huguenots remonstrated with him for the step which he meditated Henry had replied with his usual wisdom : “ Were I of your advice there would soon be neither King nor Kingdom in France ; I desire to give peace to all my subjects and repose to my soul ”. Whether he sacrificed his convictions in abjuring Protestantism has been a matter for lively dispute. D'Aubigné asserts that he was afterwards much troubled in mind about his conversion, but d'Aubigné was an extreme Protestant, and against his evidence is that of Palma Cayet who (444) maintains that Henry had long been exercised about the reality of the Holy Eucharist.¹ The truth is that he was marvellously well adapted for the part he had to play ; he was conciliation incarnate, pliant in religion, and inclined to adopt that which he could label “ the religion of all brave men ”. Profiting by his temperamental adaptability, he had thus won his way to the throne in spite of the Church and the League and Paris and Philip of Spain.

The results entirely justified the step which he had taken. Adhesions poured in and the depth of royalism was at last made plain. Henry's success was indeed an extraordinary

¹ Palma Cayet, *op. cit.*, 495.

triumph for legitimacy. Reims was in the hands of young Guise, so the coronation had to take place at Chartres and was thus shorn of much of its splendour (27 February, 1594).¹

In Paris itself a strong and ever-growing party, headed by the *Parlement*, favoured an accommodation with Henry. Brissac, the "Leaguish" governor to whom Mayenne had handed the city, was soon himself convinced of the wisdom of coming to terms, and on 22 March the King found himself at last in a position to make an entry into his Capital. He was received with unbounded enthusiasm as he proceeded to Notre Dame to give thanks to God. At heart in fact the city was moderate Catholic, and had been terrorized into its extreme attitude by the violence of the "Sixteen" and the presence of foreign troops, just as 200 years later it was terrorized by the violence of the great Committee of Public Safety into extremes against which its conscience really revolted. Worn out by the sufferings of the long siege it now welcomed Henry as a peacemaker. The foreign troops marched out the same evening with the honours of war and Henry, as he witnessed their departure through the Porte Saint-Denis, saluted the leaders remarking: "Commend me to your master but do not return"; a sally which made men smile.² That same evening he sat down to a hand of cards with that bitterest of his opponents, the Duchess of Montpensier. His clemency in fact was admirable.³ He had for long been tolerating the introduction of provisions into the city,⁴ and now he granted safe conducts to the Papal Legate and the Cardinal de Pelvé and freely pardoned the University.⁵

Paris secured, there were still many interests to be pacified. What were the extreme Leaguers to do? the men who had sworn not to accept Henry, converted or not; men like Mayenne and Guise who had themselves aspired to the Crown?

¹ An account of the *Sacre* is given in Palma Cayet, op. cit. 553, and cp. d'Aubigné, op. cit. ix. 9.

² Palma Cayet, op. cit. 569.

³ A Spaniard once said of him: "He fights like a Devil and pardons like a God".

⁴ d'Aubigné, op. cit. viii. 330 note.

⁵ *Ibid.* op. cit. ix. 18.

What would be the attitude of Philip, who had seen the cup dashed so rudely from his lips? What would be that of the Pope, who could not but regard the abjuration as irregular and a slight upon the Holy See? Most important of all, would public opinion in France remain steadfast? The last of these questions was quickly answered. The religious conscience of the country once quieted, the patriotic conscience awoke. On this awakening sense Henry worked with consummate ability by identifying on every opportunity the cause of the League with the cause of Spain, and so converting the civil war into a foreign war and exposing want of patriotism in its true guise as treason. Under these incentives adhesion succeeded adhesion and capitulation capitulation. Rouen, Abbeville, Reims, quickly followed the example of Paris. Poitiers was taken on 16 June, 1594, and Laon on 2 August. In a year the King had recovered at least one-half of the provinces and towns which had adhered to the League. Some towns, however, stood out, such as Amiens, which swore that "it would never recognize the King of Navarre under whatever necessity, until the Pope should have uplifted his excommunication".

As for the leaders of the League, Charles II of Lorraine made terms on 16 November, 1594. Guise followed suit on 29 November.¹ With regard to the Pope Henry's anxiety to come to terms in that quarter displeased the extreme Gallicans, who were quite content that the King's conversion should remain a national event achieved by national means.² Henry's judgment, however, told him that papal absolution was necessary to reconcile the ultra-Catholics and he decided to risk the anger of the Gallicans. Clement VIII hesitated long. He had been stung by the independent way in which the conversion had been effected; but it gradually came home to him that, if he did not reconcile himself with France, a schism might ensue and an entirely independent church be set up;

¹ Sully, *op. cit.* i. 178 *sqq.* "Les François et surtout la noblesse conserveront toujours leur amour pour la liberté et sans abandonner la religion de leur ancestres se separeront du S. Siège à l'exemple des Anglois plutôt que de subir le joug des Espagnols" (de Thou, *op. cit.* xii. 17).

² *Ibid.* *op. cit.* xii. 26.

whereas by absolving Henry he would assert the necessity of the papal sanction, and so deal a blow at Gallicanism and humiliate the authors of the ceremony of Saint-Denis. For a moment the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, which followed on the murderous attack on the King of a certain Jean Chatel (27 December, 1594), who was supposed to have learnt his evil doctrines from that *boutique de Satan* the Society of Jesus, threatened to interrupt the negotiations. But—urged by the leaders of the League—Clement persevered in his course of conciliation. He insisted that Henry should acknowledge the inadequacy of the absolution of Saint-Denis, that he should agree to publish the articles of the Council of Trent, establish Catholicism in Béarn, and see to the execution of the Concordat. Henry agreed. Papal absolution was worth the price. On 17 September, 1595, in front of Saint Peter's the ceremony of absolution was performed by proxy.¹

Mayenne, it has been said, had remained irreconcilable. But in the autumn he sent a messenger to Henry asking him to appoint a place where he might come and make submission. The King met him at Monceaux and treated him with wise consideration. He gave him Châlons-sur-Saône, Seurre, and Soissons and the government of the Île de France (exclusive of Paris); also an indemnity of 2,640,000 *livres*.

The position of Philip II of Spain was a different matter. Open hostilities with Spain were part of Henry's scheme for the consolidation of France. In the early days of 1595 he gathered his forces together and sprang at Philip's throat (17 January, 1595). The Spaniards on the other hand advanced as far as Dijon and the armies met at Fontaine-Françoise (5 June, 1595). Henry's incomparable gallantry and steadfastness rose superior to odds of five to one. He drove the Spaniards over the Saône and in turn invaded Franche Comté; but the intervention of the Swiss Cantons prevented him from annexing the district. The campaign of Fontaine-Françoise was perhaps the greatest of Henry's military feats.²

After this first success, however, fortune deserted Henry's

¹ See Ranke, "History of the Popes" (1907), II. 49 *sqq.*

² Sully, *op. cit.* 198.

arms; Ham, it is true, fell to the royalists on 21 June, but Fuentes, the new governor of the Netherlands, inflicted a severe defeat on them at Doullens (24 July, 1595). On 7 October, Cambrai fell into his hands; Henry took la Fère; but in April Calais, and on 23 May Ardres were lost. It was clear that a great effort was necessary if France was to shake off the clutches of Spain; and in the autumn Henry summoned to Rouen an Assembly of Notables¹ to confront the economic situation, for his finances were in a desperate condition. The Notables voted a tax of a *sol per livre* on all merchandise, but recourse had also to be made to the vicious expedients of forced loans, sales of offices, and the like. The *Parlements* remonstrated, and their opposition was only overcome by the usual registration of the edicts in a *lit de justice*.

But Henry required more than money; he required allies. Ever since the days of Coligny and the Treaty of Hampton Court there had been a drift towards an understanding between France, England, and the United Provinces against Spain. In the first glow of restored Catholic unity France seemed likely to fall away from this concert. But, when Henry found himself still at war with Spain and even held at bay by her, he thought it necessary to reaffirm this alliance. At Greenwich, therefore, in May, 1596, an offensive and defensive alliance between France and England was signed, the United Provinces being subsequently embraced in the treaty; Henry undertook not to make peace or truce with Spain without the consent of both powers. Slowly and painfully he was meanwhile making headway in the disaffected districts. Joyeuse, who had raised Toulouse against the King, had submitted. Provence, where d'Épernon had put himself at the head of a rebellion, was pacified (1596). The see-saw warfare between Lesdiguières and Charles Emmanuel indeed continued, but Mercœur in Brittany was gradually being worn down, though he was not actually brought to terms till 1598.

¹ He had sworn to assemble the States General within six months but never attempted to do so. He knew well enough that they were utterly discredited by their connexion with the League and that public opinion did not demand them.

The hostilities with Spain proceeded, and in March, 1597, a severe blow was dealt at France by the seizure of Amiens, which had been made the base for the military operations in the North-East.¹ It cost Henry a six months' siege to retake it, and it was only by the resourceful financial administration of Sully that he was able to bear the expense and provide for the necessary forces,² the *ban* and *arrière-ban* being called out for the purpose. The siege, however, completely drained the feeble resources of the kingdom;³ Spain was equally worn out: both sides consequently welcomed the intervention of the Pope, and on 2 May, 1598, was signed the Treaty of Vervins,⁴ which restored to France Le Blavet, Ardres, Doullens, and Calais, remitted the question of Saluzzo to the mediation of the Pope, and settled the great Burgundian question in a manner favourable to France. It was in fact a re-enactment of the terms of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis; but it was also a cynical abandonment of England and the United Provinces, and a departure from the specific terms of the Treaty of Greenwich. This desertion of his allies by Henry set the seal on the close of the religious struggle just as the politic abandon-

¹ It was in 1597 that Henry declared that there must be famine unless he got money; and the Assembly of Notables decided to dock a year's salary from officers of justice and hand it to the King—a characteristically haphazard expedient.

² Henry's consternation at the news of the fall of Amiens is graphically described in "Sages et Royales Œconomies," op. cit. 246. Sully was summoned to the Louvre in the middle of the night and found the King in the little chamber beyond the *cabinet aux oyseaux* in his night-dress, striding about, deep in thought, with his hands behind his back. He took Sully by the shoulder as was his custom and said: "Ha! mon amy; quel malheur. Amiens est pris." Sully, with his usual rather aggressively superior wisdom, replied with the truism—"Vault mieux pays ruiné que pays perdu". All the artillery and ammunition and a considerable sum of money were taken with Amiens.

³ See Sully, op. cit. 248 *sqq.* "Mit un Paris devant Amiens," says d'Aubigné, op. cit. ix. 133.

⁴ See Rott, "Henri IV; les Suisses et la Haute Italie," 1882, p. 29. It was a truce rather than a peace. France reserved the right to interfere in Italy and Spain in Burgundy. The question of Saluzzo remained outstanding.

ment of his religion had begun that desirable process. The duel with Spain was not indeed at an end, but the issue between the two countries would for the future be simplified. The religious animosity allayed, Spain could no longer figure as the champion of religion; for the future the struggle would be purely political. Burgundian in extraction, the Spanish monarchs must now stand forward in their true rôle as Burgundian pretenders. Philip III would be to Henry IV exactly what Jean *Sans Peur* and Charles the Bold had been to Charles VII and Louis XI. No Frenchman who dallied with Spain could for the future disguise his treason under the cloak of religion. Meanwhile for a season the exhausted combatants drew breath, "laying aside their arms but not their spite".¹ Even before the Peace of Vervins Henry had attempted the settlement of the religious difficulties which still subsisted. The Protestants had of course been staggered by the conversion of their leader, and had not unnaturally resented the repeated overtures by which Henry had sought to propitiate the Catholics. They pressed their demands upon the King, insisting on the recognition of their eligibility for all offices, on the maintenance of all the towns which they then held, and on free exercise of their religion.

It looked like a renewal of religious war. This was exactly what Henry did not want. He had no desire to be at war with his old allies. Besides, a purely religious struggle would have been a reversal of his carefully designed policy of identifying civil with foreign war, and so forcing the extreme Catholics to choose between acceptance of his rule and alliance with Spain, i.e. treason. It was therefore necessary to arrive at a religious pacification which should satisfy the Protestants without provoking the Catholics beyond measure. So on 13 April, 1598, was signed the Edict of Nantes.² By this famous document it was laid down that Catholicism was the estab-

¹ Rott, op. cit. 31, quoting Vittorio Siri.

² The Edict of Nantes is printed in Isambert, "Receuil des anciennes lois," xv. 170, 399. An analysis of its ninety-two articles is given in d'Aubigné, op. cit. ix. 450 (see also Rulhière, "Éclaircissements historiques," 1788). It was not finally registered until August, 1599.

lished and general religion of France, but that at the same time the reformed religion should enjoy certain liberties; it should have entire liberty in those places where it had been at liberty in August, 1596 and 1597, and also in the places allotted to it by the Peace of Bergerac ¹ (1577). All vassals of the crown might worship in private according to the reformed rites (not more than thirty persons to a congregation); the greater vassals could worship publicly. In all other places and to all other persons the reformed worship was forbidden, above all in Paris and within five leagues thereof, and in the armies (except in the quarters of Protestant generals). As citizens Protestants were admitted to all offices, honours, and appointments on equal terms with Catholics, and a special chamber, called the *Chambre de l'Édit*, was set up in the *Parlement de Paris*, with corresponding chambers in the provinces, for the protection of their interests. There was a great outburst of wrath from the ultra-Catholics who could not abide the idea of treating heretics as fellow-citizens, and especially from the clergy and from the *Parlement de Paris*. In reality the edict was a political settlement, a concession of terms to Protestantism for the sake of peace, but no concession of principle. France must remain Catholic and the Protestants a mere sect, tolerated only because of their proved power for harm. Thus if the edict was a proof of the strength of Protestantism it was also a proof of the supremacy of Catholicism. It was hardly an advance in point of toleration on the settlement of 1577. As for religious unity, the State had suffered so much for the sake of this cherished ideal that it had now resolved no longer to stake its existence on it. Thus France took the lead on the path of toleration, not however with any idea that she was a pioneer towards higher things, but with many a sigh that such concessions were necessary.

The period of the religious wars definitely closes with the registration of the Edict of Nantes. During that period France had fallen to a very low level in Europe. The decline was reflected in the social conditions of the country. Civil

¹ i.e. about seventy-five towns, including la Rochelle, Nîmes, Montpellier, Grenoble.

war notoriously breeds insecurity and discontent, and insecurity and discontent were rife in France, although Montaigne was able to live undisturbed and unprotected at his country seat throughout the civil wars, and although Olivier de Serre paints a rosy enough picture of the conditions of life.¹ The reign was divided almost equally between anarchy, when Henry was striking the last blow in the religious quarrel, and prosperity, when he was able to turn his attention to administrative matters. The settlement of 1598 and the strong policy adopted by Henry IV quickly put an end to insecurity. The process which has been called "the transformation of France" was not indeed actually accomplished until the days of Colbert, but it is clear that Henry IV was putting such a process in train when he met his death, and that only the knife of Ravaillac was responsible for its postponement. Henry IV first and Richelieu and Colbert afterwards demonstrated how slight the margin was between misery and prosperity within, and between insignificance and supremacy without.

In conjunction with his famous minister, Sully, Henry now embarked on a root and branch reform of the administration. It is easy for us, who know the subsequent course of French history, to lament that it was on principles of the purest absolutism that this reform was based, easy to regret that no sphere was opened in which men might have learnt statecraft and gained experience in government. For it was the lack of this that gave so disastrous a turn to the great Revolution. But it is difficult to see how Henry could have done otherwise. The birth of French patriotism involved, it would seem, the reincarnation of monarchical absolutism. Turn where he might, every organ that suggested liberties or popular interference with government savoured also of rebellion. Of the States General Henry had seen enough in 1593: they were utterly discredited in his eyes; and although he had promised to call them in six months,² he never so much as considered the expediency of summoning them for the rest of his reign. And not in his eyes alone were they discredited

¹ Olivier de Serre, "le Théâtre d'agriculture" (1804).

² See Isambert, *op. cit.* xv. 3.

but in those also of all good citizens. "Après trois jours non valables," ran a contemporary aphorism, referring to the legislation of States General;¹ and indeed it is clear that the benevolent rule of a patriotic monarch seeking his country's interests as Henry IV did must be better than that of three orders disunited and fighting for their own. The *Parlements* were another matter; they did not at any rate depend for their existence on the royal summons. But they too were discredited from their violent bias in religious matters. It was only after a ten years' struggle, for instance, that the *Parlement* of Rouen consented to register the Edict of Nantes: and it was in the teeth of the *Parlement de Paris* that Henry, when he was anxious to conciliate Catholic opinion, restored the exiled Jesuits (September, 1603).² Thus the *Parlements* were reckoned by Henry as an obstacle to Government; he could not trust them. He therefore decided that they must be his servants rather than his counsellors. It was not in fact on any popular or constitutional body that he proposed to rely. He turned rather to the irresponsible *Conseil du Roi*, reduced its numbers to twelve, purified it of all hereditary taint, weeded out the princes, the great churchmen, and *seigneurs*, and then concentrated administrative functions in its hands. An inner ring of the *Conseil*, known as the *Conseil d'Affaires*, was in reality supreme. The powers of the local governors were everywhere reduced, and the policy of concentrating all administrative power in the hands of this small knot of counsellors which surrounded the throne was carefully prosecuted. Henry trampled on the local estates, infringed municipal liberties, and made royal justice and royal taxation a reality in every corner of the kingdom.

In all this his right hand man was Maximilien de Béthune, Baron of Rosny, afterwards Duke of Sully. Sully was the first of the great line of ministers, which included Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert, who were responsible for the great transformation of France, for her internal prosperity, and for the amazing increase in her prestige as a European power during the ensuing century. Sully was his master's close

¹ Picot, *op. cit.* II. 391.

² Sully, *op. cit.* I. pp. 526-7.

friend and confidant and shared many of his noble characteristics; his courage, for instance, his tireless energy, and his enthusiasm. But he had a dash of the mountebank, of the braggart vanity of the Gascon; his teeming imagination may have bred his great conceptions, but it also made him untrustworthy and gave him that touch of the bizarre which is his distinguishing characteristic. This imagination had free scope in the memoirs which he compiled during his long retirement, gave them what has been well called *forme bizarre et fatigante*, and makes them the torment of historians. His extraordinary plan was to make four secretaries compile the work and tickle his vanity by reading to him the record of his services, magnified for his gratification in many instances out of all recognition. The result is a curious blend of fact and wild fiction. Imaginary embassies, elaborate policies, which were really only conceived in the long days of enforced retirement, are here mixed with an eyewitness' accounts of the most intimate matters of State and with personal details of Henry's court and camp which are of enthralling interest. But every word of the "Sages et Royales Œconomies" has to be checked and verified from other authorities. One has to read them with "the lead constantly going". Sully, in fact, exaggerated everything but his own services to the State, and these he could not exaggerate.¹

Sully, with whose talent for economy Henry had become acquainted when they were campaigning together in the old days of the religious wars, was introduced into the *Conseil des Finances* in 1596, and at once set out on a mission of inspection of four of the *généralités*.² He describes, probably for once with little more than truth, the effect of his visitation on the fraudulent *trésoriers*. He returned with a sum of 500,000 crowns. It was the beginning of a reign of fierce probity.

¹ Cf. Fagniez, "L'Économie sociale de la France sous Henri Quatre" (1897).

² France was divided for financial purposes into a certain number of *généralités* (there were thirty-two in 1789). The name *généralité* was derived from the *généraux des finances*—the functionaries responsible for the collection of taxes.

The maintenance of the prolonged siege of Amiens was undoubtedly made possible by Sully's administration alone. And all the while he was labouring day and night to master the intricacies of the national finance.¹ In 1598 he was created *Surintendant des Finances*. Henry placed implicit confidence in his honesty and skill and gave him the unwavering support which only a big-hearted master gives to a trusted servant. His violence and brutality provoked anger amongst the great *seigneurs*, and his administration was as unpopular as a strictly honest administration is always likely to be; but Henry knew the value of his minister and when, on one occasion, d'Épernon threatened him with physical violence, the King wrote that "he would be his (Sully's) second if necessary".² The result of this administration was a wonderful recuperation of the national finance, and to a great extent also of the national prosperity—a striking demonstration of the economic strength and elasticity of the kingdom. The details are unfortunately obscured by Sully's inveterate bragging. The figures he gives are generally quite incredible and even contradict each other. But the grand fact remains incontrovertible that, inheriting a bankrupt kingdom in 1596, Henry, thanks to this wise and honest minister, was able to leave an accumulated treasure of at least 12,000,000 *livres*.

When Sully took office he was confronted with an annual deficit of 6,000,000 crowns. The total liabilities of the State he estimated in 1599 at 297,000,000 *livres*, of which 67,000,000 were loans from foreign governments. These figures are probably exaggerated, and though Sully certainly reduced the debt he did not reduce it to the extent that he claims. The interest on the public debt amounted to 7,800,000 *livres* and the arrears in 1605 stood at 60,000,000. A Commission was appointed (1604) for the revision of the debt, and it advised that the interests for every year should be secured on the ordinary receipts for that year. This could not be done without recourse to an increase of taxation or a reduction of either the capital or the interest. The former course was evidently un-

¹ Sully, op. cit. I. 244.

² *Ibid.* op. cit. I. 298.

desirable, and the Commission recommended that the more irregularly contracted portion of the debt should be annulled, and the interest and capital of the legitimate debt that remained over and above, reduced. This scheme was an obvious injustice to the State creditors, and it provoked such feeling in Paris that Henry decided to withdraw it. Sully, however, was not defeated, and what he could not do openly by legislative means, he proceeded to do surreptitiously by administrative means. In this way he abolished about 4,000,000 of annual *rentes*, i.e. reduced the interest on the debt to that extent. But even the *rentes* that were maintained were only paid with great irregularity. The interest was more often than not only paid once a year instead of four times. There were in seventeen years only eleven such quarterly payments. These were the *rentes* secured on the general receipts of the Crown. Those which were secured on the *don gratuit* of the clergy were hardly better paid; for the *don gratuit* itself was most irregular. On the whole Sully was most unscrupulous in his methods for reducing the debt and the interest thereon; and the position of the State creditor under his rule was une viable. But while he was thus reducing the liabilities of the Crown he was also busily engaged in an attempt to increase its receipts. His policy broadly speaking was to resume as many of the taxes as he could into the hands of the Crown. Some of the taxes had been alienated to private persons, in some cases to foreign potentates; and, at the risk of affronting these personages, they were redeemed and administered by the Crown. The domain also had to a great extent been pledged; and it is one of Sully's most creditable financial exploits that to a large extent he managed to recover the alienated domain and replace it in the hands of the Crown. His plan for effecting this reform was to contract with certain financiers to buy out those to whom the royal domain was in pledge, and to give them the usufruct thereof for a period (usually sixteen years); on condition that at the end of that period it returned to the Crown free of all charges. This was undoubtedly a reform that greatly benefited the Crown, but one may question if the position of the domain

during the sixteen years in which it was in the hands of the contractors was altogether enviable. By 1607 it was estimated —by others than Sully—that 30,000,000 *livres* worth of domain had in this way been recovered for the Crown.

With regard to the taxes Sully was not a great innovator. He had too shaky a financial position at the outset to enable him to strike out a new line as a reformer in this direction. But it is not unreasonable to suppose that, had his period of office been prolonged, it was part of his scheme to readjust the nature and incidence of taxation. Both he and Henry felt the injustice of the *taille*¹ which was the most important of the taxes. It was not in itself oppressive, indeed it is difficult to see how a less oppressive direct tax could have been conceived. In the *pays d'état*,² where it was levied on landed property only, and only on *roturier* land,³ it fell very lightly. One-third of the country in area, population, and wealth, the

¹ For the *taille*, Avenel, "Richelieu et la Monarchie absolue" (ed. 1895), II. 205.

² *Pays d'état* and *pays d'élection*.

The *pays d'état* were the more recently acquired districts which had been able to make good bargains for themselves. Brittany, for instance, escaped nearly all taxation until 1580, and Navarre and Foix got off very lightly. Normandy always bore more than her fair share, viz. about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the entire taxation of the kingdom in the fifteenth century and in the seventeenth about $\frac{1}{6}$. Provence (a *pays d'état*) paid 591,000 *livres*, Orleansais (a *pays d'élection*) 2,668,000. In the nineteenth century Orleansais came to pay $\frac{2}{6}$ less than in the sixteenth century and Provence four times as much.

The term *pays d'élection* is deceptive for there was less election (as we understand the word) in these districts than elsewhere, and not much anywhere. The name was derived from the *élus* who were originally appointed in nearly all *généralités* to assist the royal officials to collect the *aides*, and assess for the *taille*. In 1372 they ceased to be in any way elected and became simply royal functionaries while preserving the deceptive name of *élus*. The "Election" was thus simply a royal tribunal arbitrarily appointed for purposes of taxation (in 1789 there were 178 such tribunals) and the districts where they operated were called *pays d'élection*.

It should be noted also that, in order to secure their allegiance, Henry had granted exemptions from certain taxes for terms of years, or even special terms for ever, to cities and even to whole provinces, e.g. to Amiens.

³ *Supra*, I. 305, note.

pays d'état paid only one-eleventh of the tax. Elsewhere the *taille* was personal and fell on the entire property of the payer. It was not in principle but in the arbitrariness of its incidence and the abuses of collection that the *taille* was oppressive. These inequalities and abuses were the growth of ages, and the former at least were probably inevitable in a country which had grown together piecemeal, as France had, and which, with the vocation to unity, had so many of the elements of diversity. The abuses of collection were not inevitable and those who tolerated them are the more blameworthy. The result was that a tax, in itself neither oppressive nor unjust, fell in the most burdensome and capricious way on the people. It fell, for example, in the *pays d'état* on *roturiers* and those who owned *roturier* lands but not even on all of them. The burden on those upon whom it did fall was increased by every exemption. Thus it fell with undue severity on the very shoulders that were least able to bear it; so that in the eighteenth century it earned the name of "the peasants' tax". In one of the *Cahiers* of the Estates-General of 1789 (that of the Baillage of Nemours drawn up by the celebrated Dupont de Nemours) the following remarkable words occur: "One will hardly believe that in order to become noble it is sufficient to become rich, and to cease to pay taxes it is sufficient to become noble. So there is only one way of escaping taxation and that is to make a fortune." It was mainly the *taille* that gave truth to this scathing epigram.

But the good that Sully and Henry did in the matter of the *taille* was balanced by the harm that they did in increasing the pressure of the much more unfair duty on salt known as the *gabelle*. The fact that the *gabelle* pressed very unequally on the different provinces was possibly the reason for their policy in this matter. The sacrifice of a few districts appeared to them a minor affair. In reality it made the burden in the *pays de grandes gabelles* doubly severe.¹ The *aides*

¹ The *pays de grandes gabelles* were the *généralités* of Paris, Amiens, Soissons, Orléans, Tours, Bourges, Moulins, Rouen, Châlons, Caen, Alençon, Dijon, Brittany, Artois, Franche Comté, Béarn, in fact all the most recently added provinces were exempt. Limousin, Poitou,

(excise) Sully maintained, but he greatly improved the method of their collection. They had hitherto been farmed out to countless agents, and, when Sully placed them all in the hands of one official in 1603, he greatly facilitated the levying of the tax and lessened the necessity for middlemen's profits.¹

That Sully and his master were free traders in principle has been put to their credit by historians; and it is perfectly true that they desired the free circulation and exchange of commodities. That they were not able to shake off the petty and very destructive internal *douanes* to more than a limited extent was probably due to financial necessity rather than to actual approval of the method. The recrudescence of war with Spain also involved a repudiation of the policy of external free trade, and a fiscal as well as an actual war was opened with that country, which was one of the largest customers of France. It is probably true to say that Henry and his ministers were convinced of the advantage of free trade, and were only prevented from giving effect to their conviction by financial and political exigencies. That they were advocates of indirect as opposed to direct taxation is also true. But it was an unfavourable moment for the introduction of the former. Commerce and agriculture had been ruined by the wars and were only slowly lifting their heads, and under those conditions it was a mistake to hamper them with small exactions. The fact that prices had risen to six times their recent rate naturally made the further rise which such taxation involved additionally undesirable. The verdict on the financial régime of Sully should not, however, be affected by the purely temporary obstacles which it encountered. On the whole it was conceived on lines which were at once firm and broad. Firm

Guyenne had bought themselves out and were *pays redimés*. They paid very little. Lyonnais, Maconnais, Bresse, Bugey, Forez, Beaujolais, Roussillon, and Southern Auvergne were subject to a light duty; they were the *pays de petites gabelles*. The price of the *minot* of salt (40-100 *litres*) reached 8 *livres*, 5 *sous*, 2 *den.* under Henry IV, in the *pays de grandes gabelles*. Sully thought this the utmost possible; it reached 40 *livres* in Paris in 1661.

¹ The *aides* only amounted to the moderate sum of 12,000,000 *livres* at the end of Richelieu's time.

inasmuch as they recognized the impossibility of reductions until the solvency of the kingdom was assured ; and broad in that they recognized principles which had hitherto been ignored, but the soundness of which was afterwards proved in practice.

In one direction only Sully took a reactionary step. The venality of judicial offices, though a very bad, was not a new thing ; but it was now developed into a regular system. A tax of a sixtieth of its purchase price was levied annually on every judicial office and the office became hereditary. This *droit annuel* was known as *la paulette* (from the name of its inventor). Heredity of office was immensely prized by the office holders and the annual payment was a lucrative source of revenue to the Crown.¹ Paulet himself farmed the tax for 2,263,000 *livres*. The office of Councillor of the *Parlement* which in 1559 was worth from 10,000 to 12,000 *livres* sold in the reign of Henry's successor for 70,000. This was a reactionary step and the *paulette* not only defiled the fountain of justice, but created the *Noblesse de la Robe* who became in the end the most capricious opponents of the royal power.²

But Sully and his master were more than mere financiers. They were the true type of beneficent despot and set themselves to promote the prosperity of agriculture, trade, and commerce by wise reforms and generous expenditure on useful public works. Nothing is more difficult or more dangerous than to generalize on the economic condition of France at any particular moment. France is one of the most diverse countries in Europe and the conditions vary to an astonishing extent between district and district. This diversity was emphasized in early times by the difficulties of communication, the varying

¹ " If the officer deserves the office it is unreasonable that he should have to buy it, if he does not there is even less reason for selling it to him," is the pithy comment of a contemporary. See Normand, " *La Bourgeoisie française au XVII^e siècle* " (1908).

² In 1614 the States General demanded the abolition of the *paulette*. But so great was the outcry of the magistrates, who thereby lost a valuable bit of property for which they had paid in hard cash, that it had to be restored in the following year. It was once more abolished in 1618 on the demand of the Notables, and again renewed in 1620.

administrations, the dearth of waterways, and the internal *douanes*. Thus it is that we read so much of want and misery in times which we know to have been prosperous, and thus only can we account for the puzzling contradictions in contemporary writers. There can be no doubt, however, that the wars of religion had thrown every industry in France into disorder, and not least the all-important industry of agriculture. There are plenty of pictures of the misery of the country districts during the early years of the reign. Cavalli, for instance, describes a ruined countryside, live stock to a large extent destroyed and fields untilled; the houses of the peasantry abandoned; instead of an honest and civil agricultural population as of old, one coarse, cunning, and fierce, rendered so by the sight of bloodshed and war. Or read the "*Satyre Menippée*" in order to realize how the country was mulcted by those who took profit out of the wars. It would be easy to multiply these pictures. Even during the period of war Henry had displayed his care for the country and his desire to lighten the burden of the war. Associations for mutual protection too had sprung up all over the country, so that it would be a mistake to assume that agricultural France at the end of the period of religious war was a scene of absolute misery. And there was always beneath the surface that immense recuperative power with which France is endowed. She was still able to pay 10,000,000 crowns a year (nearly 100,000,000 francs); and side by side with such pictures as the above we must place the picture of the agriculturist Olivier de Serre, who led the life of a country gentleman, carried out agricultural experiments, and wrote one of the most famous books on agriculture while civil war was raging round him, much in the same way that Sidonius Apollinaris had lived and written while the barbarian invasions were raging around him. It would be possible to draw from the "*Théâtre d'Agriculture*" and the poems of Noël du Fail¹ an idyllic picture of French country life at the close of the sixteenth century, and we may probably conclude that such life was possible at that time side by side with much misery. Nevertheless it must be remembered that de Serre and du

¹ Noël du Fail, "*Propos rustiques*" (1856).

Fail were idealists, while Priuli and Cavalli professed only to write of what they saw; so that it will be safest to lay the emphasis on the dark side of the picture.

Henry, with his wonderful energy and enthusiasm and his knowledge of and taste for country life, threw himself heartily into a hundred plans for the enrichment of the country. Immense schemes of drainage were evolved, the greatest of which was that for the *désèchement* of the marshes of Bordeaux. Dutch contractors, who had the best experience in that kind of work, were brought to France to carry out these schemes. It is not surprising to read that all the thanks he got for his benefaction were complaints at the loss of fish and protests against taxation. It is the fate of all improvers. But he persisted steadily in the work of drainage. Schemes for afforestation were also developed. Sully was a lover of trees: the oaks along the highroads giving shade and shelter were long known as "Sullys," though Henry III was probably the first to commence planting them.¹ Irrigation, the cultivation of the mulberry, and a host of minor reforms, also marked the reign. Sully was more old-fashioned than his master, and discouraged as unsuitable to the climate of France the manufacture of silk.² But Henry IV was the real father of the great silk industry of Lyons.³

Finance and economics were not the only spheres in which Henry and his minister displayed their energy and statesmanship. The old bad feeling which had grown up in the days when Burgundy had been allied with England against the French Crown, and had reached its crisis when the League had leant on the support of Philip of Spain, was not yet dead. Fifty years later we shall find Condé fighting for Spain against his country with as much indifference as Bourbon when he bore arms against Francis I. But so long as Henry lived he set his face against this disintegrating force, and, having

¹ An elm said to have been planted by Sully may still be seen in the courtyard of No. 254 Rue St. Jacques in Paris. "La France périrait faute de bois," Sully said; but much good was also done by clearing forests.

² In much the same way that Colbert later discouraged the vine.

³ Louis XI had started silk in a small way (*supra*, i. 335).

wrested the religious pretext from his rebellious subjects, made treason stand out in its naked shame. For all his clemency he knew how to deal with traitors. But his premature death threw everything back into the old conditions, and it was not until Richelieu revived and amplified his policy that treason was at last stamped out and patriotism took its place. The credit for initiating the policy which Richelieu carried to so triumphant an issue belongs to Henry IV.

Let us picture the great King in the closing years of his reign ; a man approaching fifty, pale and somewhat aged, for his life has been one of excess ; though subject to attacks of gout, he has yet preserved his activity practically unimpaired. He gallops into the Louvre with the quails he has shot at his saddle bow. Fourteen of them with some melons go to his evening meal : quails are his favourite dish ; eight are sent to the Queen as a peace-offering for the latest infidelity. After the quails and melons he retires to bed to be read to sleep with “*Amadis de Gaule*”. Or at another time Sully kneels at his bedside or withdraws with him into the embrasure of the window of the *Cabinet des oyseaux* ; or the King paces the apartment, his hands clasped behind him, stopping occasionally to rest a hand on his minister’s shoulder and squeeze it. He speaks with great charm and variety of intonation, with wit, *bonhomie*, and good temper. These informal councils are brief and to the point. The conclusions are rapidly reached and as rapidly put into execution. In this fashion, or as often as not on horseback in the glades of Fontainebleau, the two evolve their beneficent schemes, foreign policy, financial policy, public works ; no detail escapes these clear-headed, active, thorough-going men of business : they constituted a virile, vigorous, and thoroughly efficient fountain of government.

The reforms of Sully gave great umbrage to the Princes of the Blood who found themselves excluded from all share in the government of the kingdom. The divorce of the childless Margaret of Valois and the marriage of the King to Marie de’ Medici (17 December, 1600)¹ followed as it was by the birth

¹ When Sully and Villeroy greeted him with the startling news : *nous venons de vous marier !* Henry remained for a *demy quart*

of a dauphin (September, 1601) brought this discontent to a head. The Duke of Savoy and the King of Spain were watching for an opportunity to ruin Henry, and they found a valuable ally in the Duke of Biron, Henry's most talented general, who, carried away by ambition, began to conspire against his master. Another menace was from the plots of the d'Entragues, the family of Henry's new mistress, Henriette d'Entragues.¹ She had borne him a son within a month of the birth of the Dauphin, and, basing a claim on a half promise of marriage, which Henry seems to have given in a moment of infatuation, she entertained hopes of securing the legitimation of her son and his preference over the Dauphin.

The discontented Protestants now made advances to the discontented Catholics, and it seemed for a moment that Henry, in his attempt to conciliate both parties, had only alienated both. Bouillon, one of the most powerful of the Huguenot leaders, father of the great Turenne, threw himself into the intrigue.² It was proposed to demand the whole of the south-west and of Dauphiné for the exclusive use of the Protestants. These plots were betrayed to the King by one of the conspirators. With careful dissimulation Henry lured Biron to Court, had him arrested, tried by the *Parlement*, and,

d'heure in a brown study, scratching his head and biting his nails without making any reply. His only stipulations (but they were surely sufficiently exacting) had been that his wife must be pretty, complaisant, and a bearer of sons! (See Sully, op. cit. i. 325-6.)

¹ She is called *Pinbeche et rusée femelle* by Sully, op. cit. 319, and seems to have been a much more unpleasant and scheming person than Henry's first mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées; the Queen, not unnaturally, called the latter *cette bagasse de Gabrielle* (Sully, op. cit. 317). Henry had been talking of a marriage with Gabrielle just before her death, which took place on Good Friday, 1599. (See Sully, op. cit. 284, also Sainte Beuve, Essay on Gabrielle d'Estrées in "Causeries du lundi," Vol. VIII.)

² Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne, married Charlotte the sister and heiress of William Robert, Duke of Bouillon and Prince of Sedan, and was known as the Marshal de Bouillon. He was a stout Calvinist and intimate friend of Henry IV. The famous Marshal Turenne was his son. The marriage was arranged as a check on the ambitions of Charles of Lorraine.

on 29 July, 1602, executed.¹ Bouillon had fled the kingdom and the Protestant powers intervened in his favour. The King stood firm, and insisted that the rebel must confess and ask pardon. In the spring of 1606 Henry took Sedan, captured Bouillon and carried him to Paris. Anxious, however, not to offend Protestant feelings, he pardoned the rebel and even restored Sedan to him. Less creditable was his treatment of the unfortunate d'Entraques complication. Influenced by his passion, he was weak enough to pardon Henriette's father and brother, both of whom had been guilty of undoubted treason. The last four years of his reign were free from rebellion. His firm treatment of Biron had a wholesome effect. He had set the example which Richelieu was to follow in this as in other matters.

And indeed in foreign policy Henry IV was conscious of the problems which Richelieu afterwards solved. Henry's position was a delicate and difficult one. The Peace of Vervins had ended the period of Spanish interference in French affairs ; but France was still suffocated by the all-pervading Habsburg power : that power it must be remembered was not only entrenched in Austria and Spain, but dominated Italy by its possession of Naples and Milan and its alliance with Savoy : and was a direct menace to France from its presence in the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Franche Comté, while Alsace was also under Habsburg influence. The Habsburg power was essentially Catholic in character and became more so on the death of the Emperor Maximilian II in 1596 ; and the notable revival of Catholicism in Germany which was in progress was all to the profit of the Habsburgs and a menace to France. Henry IV, a convert to Catholicism and the ruler of a definitely Catholic people, was in an extremely difficult position. Political prudence encouraged him to grapple with the Habsburgs ; yet religious exigencies warned him in doing so to avoid offending Catholic opinion. Direct alliance with the Protestant powers was therefore dangerous. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Henry IV's foreign policy until 1610 should appear halting and tentative.

¹ Sully, *op. cit.* i. 399.

Strategically the true policy for France was to block the passes of the Alps against the Habsburgs and so sunder Germany and the Netherlands from Italy. Hence the great importance to France of Savoy, Venice, and Switzerland. It will be remembered that by the Treaty of Vervins the question of Saluzzo had been referred to the arbitration of the Pope, but the latter had declined to intervene. In the last month of the century Charles Emmanuel came to Fontainebleau and made with Henry the Treaty of Paris (27 February, 1600), by which he agreed either to restore Saluzzo or to hand over to France Bresse, Barcelonnette and Pignerolo. Charles Emmanuel failed to carry out this pledge and Henry in consequence invaded his territories, and by November, 1600, was master of the Duchy.¹ The Pope intervened and a fresh peace was made at Lyons (7 January, 1601), France receiving not only Bresse, but Bugey, Val, Romey, and Gex, a district that almost fills up the angle between the Saône and the Rhône. This was an important accession of territory, protecting as it did the great city of Lyons. But a passage to Italy by the Gresin bridge over the Rhône was specifically excluded so that the Habsburg forces in Franche Comté and the Netherlands still had access to Italy by permission of Savoy. Nevertheless this treaty threw them back more than ever on the Swiss passes. Whether Henry was wise to abandon the last good base in Italy—Saluzzo—without completely blocking the passes of Savoy to the Habsburgs is a question that does not admit of an easy answer. The Habsburgs might have been fought in Italy as well as elsewhere.

For the rest the Italian policy of Henry was much influenced by his religious position and the need for propitiating the Pope. When, on the death of Alfonso II of Este (1597), Clement VIII laid claim to Ferrara in virtue of the Bull of Pius V, which forbade all new investitures of Papal fiefs that had lapsed to the feudal overlord, the d'Este claimant looked to Henry for support. For the d'Estes had been the steady friends of the Bourbons and were their creditors

¹ "Il ne nous manque ici que des ennemies," he could write ("Lettres missives de Henri IV," op. cit. v. 306).

for large sums of money advanced during the wars of religion. Henry, however, was more influenced by policy than by gratitude, and for the moment his desire was to "raise the lilies" once more at the Papal Court, to emphasize the sincerity of his conversion and to discount the effect of the impending Edict of Nantes; his offer to support the Pope in person if need be had the desired effect, and when Clement VIII entered Ferrara he entered it as the protégé of the French King. The abandonment of Saluzzo had not therefore involved the withdrawal of French influence in Italy. The process of "raising the lilies" continued, and in 1604 the arrival of three French Cardinals in Rome heralded the formation of a new French party at the Papal Court as a counterpoise to the influence of Spain.

How considerable this influence became was demonstrated in 1607 when France mediated between the Papacy and Venice in the Sarpi controversy. The Pope had placed Venice under an interdict in 1606 because the Council of Ten had taken proceedings against an ecclesiastic, and Fra Paolo Sarpi defended the action of the Republic in disregarding the interdict. Venice was the old ally of France, but Henry IV did not wish to offend the Pope; and confined himself to a successful mediation. Clearly France was still a power to be reckoned with in Italy. In spite of this success Henry found it difficult to erect a counterpoise to Spain in Italy. For years he tried to gather round the Pope a League pledged to resist Spanish encroachments. But feeling in Italy was against him and his proposals met with a cold reception. At last he gave it up, and determined to await the day when force of circumstances should oblige the Italian States to appeal for his protection.¹

The Treaty of Lyons had not solved the question of the Alpine passes and Henry, in order to prosecute the Alpine policy, renewed the alliance with the Swiss Cantons; the

¹ "He had not counted on having to purchase the friendship of people who gave themselves to the highest bidder and whose faith is so movable that it will collapse at the first breath of fear of Spanish arms" (Henry IV, 23 June, 1602, quoted by Rott, *op. cit.* p. 140).

Paix perpetuelle of Francis I had been broken by the Catholic Cantons under the stress of the religious wars and Swiss Catholics had fought against Henry at Ivry, while Swiss Protestants had fought for him. In 1602 Henry revived the alliance in the Treaty of Soleure (29 January), eleven of the Cantons¹ agreeing to give him exclusive right to the passes for himself and his allies. The Valtelline pass which led from the valley of the Inn to the valley of the Adda² was controlled by the Grison League; the Grisons wished to reserve the privilege to France alone, but in 1603 they allowed Venice to use the pass, and in revenge Fuentes (the Spanish governor of Milan) erected on Spanish territory at the Italian egress of the pass a powerful fort called after his own name, and Henry IV did not consider himself in a position to interfere. These events had their *dénouement* in the reign of his successor.

If proof were needed that the Peace of Vervins was not regarded by Henry as a final settlement it could be found in the relations which he continued to hold with the United Provinces after its signature. Under pretext of paying off debts contracted with the Provinces France continued to subsidize them and to promote the war which they carried on with Spain. In reply to this Spain commenced in 1603 a tariff war, imposing a 30 per cent duty on all imports. This probably injured her more than it injured France, for at that time Spain was dependent on France for many of the necessities of life. Even after the Peace of Paris (12 October, 1604), which was arranged by the mediation of James I of England, Henry maintained relations with the United Provinces. He had a strong desire to acquire the Spanish Netherlands or at least the French speaking districts thereof. When thinking of a second marriage he had gone so far as to say that he would put up with the Infanta of Spain "quoique vieille et laide," if he could espouse with her the Low Countries. This question of the Low Countries was probably the most serious obstacle to a real peace between France and Spain; the district was by nature a Naboth's vineyard to France, and the

¹ Berne and Zurich stood out but subsequently agreed to similar terms.

² *Infra*, p. 148.

unrest in it and the internal opposition to Spanish rule seemed to be an opportunity for the satisfaction of her natural ambitions.

The twelve years' truce between Holland and Spain which was signed on 9 April, 1609, was important in another direction, for it brought to a definite head the question of Henry's relations to the princes of Germany. Prior to that time his attitude to the Protestant princes had been cold. In the matter of the Strassburg Bishopric, where in 1592 the Chapter had been divided and there was a contest between a Protestant and a Catholic for the government, he had been lukewarm; this was not unnatural when we remember that the Protestant princes were at that moment supporting Bouillon in his rebellion. After the accommodation with Bouillon Henry's relations with the German princes became warmer, and he proposed to become the protector of Germanic liberties. But the Evangelical Union, which was formed in 1608 to unite Lutherans and Calvinists against the encroachments of the Emperor, was somewhat chilly in its response to the advances of the apostate. In 1609, however, an event took place which gave Henry the opportunity he was awaiting for intervening in German affairs as the protector of the Germanic liberties. The Duke of Cleve-Jülich and Berg died on 25 March. The compact group of rich territories which formed his heritage gained an enhanced importance from its situation in the region intervening between the Netherlands, the United Provinces, and Germany. The Duke left no heirs and a disputed succession ensued. The Emperor sequestered the Dukedom and ordered the rival claimants, the Elector of Brandenburg and the son of the Duke of Neuburg, to submit their claims to him as feudal superior. Henry at once protested and began warlike preparations. It seemed probable that in a few months Europe would witness the opening stages of the final struggle between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs.

There were, it is painful to reflect, reasons other than those of policy for this sudden change from pacific to bellicose. Henry, who was now about sixty years of age, had not lost

with advancing years his ungovernable licentiousness. Mistress succeeded mistress, and the Court, where lawful wife and reigning mistress, legitimate and bastard children, somehow managed to exist together, resembled an Eastern harem rather than the domicile of the Most Christian King. This mode of life had preyed on Henry's constitution and temper. He was much troubled with gout, the furrows had ploughed into his face, and his beard was white. It is pitiful to see this gouty greybeard playing the lover, and to find that at that age he was still in this respect so uncontrolled as to allow his private affairs to influence his public policy. In 1608 there had appeared at Court a girl of extraordinary beauty and charm, Charlotte de Montmorency. She quickly turned the old King's head, and he intervened to prevent her marrying a certain Bassompierre in order to wed her to the Prince of Condé, who was considered so dull and weak that he would be complacent enough to countenance the relations which Henry proposed to establish with his wife. Condé, however, was not quite so mean as this, and to Henry's disgust had the impertinence to elope with his own wife and to take refuge first at Brussels then at Milan. Henry fell into transports of rage at this *enlèvement innocent*, and there can be little doubt that his preparations in 1609 were as much the outcome of his anger with Spain and Austria for entering into relations with the Prince as of the desire to protect the German princes or the determination to shake off the grasp of the Habsburgs. Henry was thus committed to war both by public policy and private predilection.

The question of Cleve-Jülich was to be the pretext for a rupture, and on 11 February, 1610, by the Treaty of Hal, Henry undertook to make war on behalf of the Elector of Brandenburg and the Duke of Neuburg in conjunction with the Evangelical Union. The attitude of the Union, however, was far from enthusiastic, and it specifically declined to promise support to Henry in the event of a Huguenot rising. It preferred, it said, to let the question of Cleve-Jülich slide rather than give such an assurance. Even less encouraging was the attitude of the King of England, who after long

hesitation declined to be drawn into a quarrel with Spain and the Empire (April). The Dutch, too, were but reluctant allies. Pope Paul V was undisguisedly hostile, and the Venetians adhered to a strict neutrality. Savoy was the most willing of the powers to join France, and on 25 April, 1610, it was agreed, by the Treaty of Brusol, that in May war should be declared in Italy and Germany for the liberty of the Church and the freedom of Italy. In spite of the adherence of Savoy Henry was ill equipped with allies. He was all the more anxious to be well equipped in other respects, and made his preparations with thoroughness and with all the care which betokens a man who intends to make war to some purpose. Indeed he prided himself greatly on his powers of military organization. He had invented a manœuvre called the "pistolade," and he used to boast that he could raise 50,000 horse and 200,000 infantry without stopping a single plough or taking a single artisan from his work. By April, 1610, he had spent upwards of 1,500,000 *livres*, and the equipment of the troops was splendid beyond words; gilded armour, velvet, and rich embroidery abounded. He had 51,000 men ready to march, but he wanted twice that number as he intended to attack Austria with four armies and an effective force of 100,000 men. To meet the charges many of Sully's long-cherished reforms had to be sacrificed. Financial reform is only possible in time of peace. It must have been bitter for so honest a financier to have to consent to a scheme for adulteration of the coinage. The *Parlement* offered a strenuous and united resistance to this proposal.

In thus throwing himself into the European arena as the champion of the Protestant powers, Henry was only reviving the policy of Coligny and anticipating that of Richelieu which was ultimately carried to so triumphant an issue. But it may be doubted if the time was yet ripe for such a policy. Coligny had been powerless to develop it, and even Henry and Sully might have found themselves unable to do so. It is clear at any rate that it was unpopular. It was costly, and increase of taxation is apt to be unpopular, but it was unpopular also because of the unbending catholicism of the nation, of the

survival of much of the spirit of the League, and of the persistence with a large section of the nation of the idea of an alliance with Spain rather than a war to the death with the Habsburgs. Most sinister of all, the independent action of the King provoked a violent crusade against Gallicanism. The dependence of Kings upon the Pope was reasserted with vigour and audacity from hundreds of pulpits and in many pamphlets. The "*Histoire Universelle*," of de Thou, which was strongly Gallican in tone, was condemned by the Roman Inquisition. With this outburst there came whispers of the vulnerability of kings. Men dared to say that Jacques Clément had done a righteous act. In strict Catholic circles there was a strong trend of opinion unfavourable to the King, and many words of an incendiary nature were let fall. Henry continued his preparations. One of his last steps before leaving for the front was to establish his Queen—Marie de' Medici—as Regent in his absence. On 13 May, acceding to her repeated requests, he caused her to be solemnly crowned and anointed in Saint-Denis. It was arranged that her state entry into Paris should take place on the 16th and that the King should start for the front immediately afterwards.

On the day after the ceremony at Saint-Denis Henry, who was in considerable agitation as the hour for his departure approached, desired to see Sully. The minister was indisposed, and the King set off for his residence at the Arsenal which was beside the river near the Bastille, not far from the present Gare de Lyon. Marie de' Medici, fatigued by the ceremonies of the previous day, retired to her cabinet to rest. An hour passed, and, hearing a great uproar in the Louvre, she locked the door so that she might not be disturbed, but when the noise continued sent Mme. de Montpensier who was with her to see that no accident had befallen the Dauphin. A little later she went out herself and found the chamber full of men with drawn swords. One of the captains of the Guard blurted out, "Oh Madame nous sommes tous perdus". Then she saw the King stretched on the bed. He was quite dead. On his way to the Arsenal Henry's carriage had been blocked in the narrow place where the Rue Saint-Honoré, without

changing direction, became the Rue de la Ferronnerie.¹ The King was leaning with his right arm on d'Épernon's shoulder listening to a letter, when a man sprang upon the wheel of the carriage and struck the King twice with a knife. The second blow pierced his heart. The murderer was a young man named François Ravallac, who had been worked up into a frenzy by the preachings of the Jesuits and by his own religious ravings. Ravallac was a maniac who acted on his own initiative. At the same time all who had talked wildly about the deaths of kings must share something of the responsibility for the crime.

Henry IV passed away just at the moment when he was about to plunge into hostilities on the grand scale. It is possible to think that he died at the right moment for his reputation. His recent unpopularity and the unpopularity of his new policy was considerable, and we may well doubt whether he could have carried to a successful issue the policy which had destroyed Coligny and which was to tax the great genius of Richelieu. Henry's death caused an immediate reaction. All his faults and foibles, his mistresses, his taxes, were forgotten, and men saw him in his true light as the man who had restored unity to a distracted kingdom and had devoted all his energy and genius to the restoration of prosperity. Look where they would they saw his hand, in drained marshes, reclaimed wastes, agricultural experiments, and industrial progress, restored finances, free circulation of commodities. His great buildings had changed the appearance of the capital. The Pont Neuf had been completed in 1603² and had at once become one of the main arteries of the city. The Place

¹ Henry II, as Richelieu tells us ("Mémoires" in Michaud et Poujoulat, Ser. II, Vol. VII, p. 22), had been similarly blocked in the Rue de la Ferronnerie and had given orders for the widening of the street, but a *mauvais démon* had prevented the carrying out of the step. The street remains practically the same to-day—a narrow alley where it is difficult for two vehicles to pass. The assassination took place opposite the present No. 3.

² It was commenced in 1598 by Henry III. The famous statue of Henry IV was completed by Richelieu and destroyed in 1792.

Dauphine¹ and the Place Royale were magnificent prototypes of the later Palais Royal. Excepting Philip Augustus Henry had perhaps added more than any other monarch to the architectural glories of the capital. Men saw all this when he was dead and revered his memory. He was the last if not the only one of the kings who had any place in the hearts of his people.

¹ Part of the architectural scheme of the Pont Neuf; it was a triangle communicating with the Palais.

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CHAPTER XXII

MARIE DE' MEDICI AND RICHELIEU

(1610-1643)

THE death of Henry involved the abandonment of the patriotic policy which he had evolved. The dauphin, Louis, was not yet nine years old and power fell at once into the hands of his mother, the long neglected wife, and now no more than decently afflicted¹ widow, of the murdered King. Henry had never been on intimate terms with his wife, and she was thus unfamiliar with his ideals; she was also on bad terms with Sully, the one statesman who might have been able to bring those ideals to realization. We enter, therefore, a period of reaction, when the beneficent internal schemes of Henry are laid on the shelf, his savings squandered on unworthy objects, the influence of the Habsburgs, which it had been the great object of his life to combat, revived, and much of the fruits of his labour wasted.

Marie turned to the *Parlement* to procure some sanction for her regency,² and a few hours after the King's death that sanction had been obtained. Sully, who was very suspicious of the new regime, came to Court for a time, but a Protestant and a skinflint was not likely to be agreeable to an ultra-Catholic and spendthrift like the Regent, and he soon had to make way for others. Secret counsellors of an unworthy type began to take the place of the old ministers; chief amongst these was Concino Concini, an adventurer who had fled from

¹ Richelieu in his "Mémoires" describes the Queen as overcome with grief. He was naturally inclined to make his patron appear in a favourable light. See Richelieu, "Mémoires," op. cit. p. 18.

² The *Parlement's* right to interfere was disputed by Soissons. Richelieu, op. cit. II. VII. 20.

Italy to escape his creditors, and had won the hand of Marie de' Medici's *dame d'atour* and confidante—Leonora Galigai. Through her good offices—to the disgust and anger of Henry IV—he had become the trusted adviser of the Queen, who was glad in her exile from Italy to welcome a compatriot.

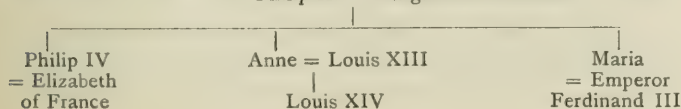
The great danger to the Queen was, of course, the aspirations of the Princes of the Blood. It was fortunate for her that they were an insignificant crew. Condé, an unworthy creature, whose only good action it was said was to beget his famous son, was an exile, and his uncle, Soissons, was also absent from Court. His other uncle, Conti, was deaf and half-witted, and could be easily satisfied. Condé returned to Paris on 15 July, but was propitiated by large concessions and a heavy bribe.¹ Sully's retirement was only a matter of time; the Spanish trend of the Regent's policy must have been very distasteful to him. An expedition under de Châtre and Rohan² had indeed taken Jülich, but now the Treaty of Brusol was repudiated and the war came to an end, proposals being made for a Spanish alliance and a double Spanish marriage.³ This reversal of the life-long policy of his master naturally roused the indignation of Sully, and on 26 January, 1611, the great *Surintendant* resigned. The lesser lights of the old administration, Villeroy, Jeannin, and Sillery (*les barbons* they were called) remained in office; but the Regent's real advisers were to be found elsewhere—in the *camerilla* which she gathered round her person, of whom the most important was Concini, a kind of French Rizzio.

¹ Including 200,000 *livres* of pension. At the same time the Queen "opened her hand widely" to all the other discontented princes and lords. Richelieu in his "*Mémoires*" comments on the folly of this (op. cit. vii. 31) *parceque la crainte retient plus que l'amour*.

² *Supra*, p. 129.

³ The heir-presumptive of Spain to Marie de' Medici's eldest daughter Elizabeth: Louis XIII to the younger daughter of Philip III. Elizabeth did eventually marry Philip IV, and Louis XIII married his sister Anne.

Philip III = Margaret of Austria



The fall of Sully and this change of policy was a triumph, not for Spain alone but also for the extreme Catholics. The theologian, Richer, who now published a vindication of the Gallican position, was degraded, and the celebrated historian, de Thou, suffered a like fate. The Protestants, who were much alarmed, began to move, and Sully's son-in-law, Rohan, came to the front as their leader. The concessions which the Government made prove the respect in which the Protestants were still held. To allay their suspicions the negotiations with Spain were conducted with great secrecy. Ultimately, it was arranged that King Louis should marry the Princess Anne of Austria, and that the two countries should pledge themselves to a ten years' alliance. The foundations of the Spanish policy thus laid, the interest centres in the Regent's relations with the Princes of the Blood. After Soissons' death in November, 1612, Marie tried to join hands with Condé, but, when she found that he required too high a payment for his friendship, she swung towards the Guises. Condé issued a manifesto complaining of the Regent's misgovernment and the dilapidation of the finances, and demanding a States General. This resulted in the Treaty of Ste. Menehould (15 May, 1614) by which large concessions, mostly in cash, were made to the princes, while the Spanish match was postponed and a States General was granted. Then, on 2 October, after taking the King on a royal progress through the disaffected West, Marie de' Medici declared that he had attained his majority. But she had no intention of giving him any power. She carefully repressed his aspirations, and made every effort to keep him a child with a child's interests, and to subordinate him to herself. In this disastrous design she was only too successful. The probability is that Louis was a boy of parts, who, under favouring conditions, might have proved a not unworthy successor of his father. His education, however, was neglected in such a way that he was never able wholly to recover the lost ground.¹ He now became a mere puppet in his mother's

¹ "On le laissa croupir dans l'oisiveté dans l'inutilité et dans une ignorance si parfaite de tout, qu'il s'est souvent plaint à mon père dans la suite, en parlant de son éducation, qu'on ne luy avait pas mesme appris à

hands, without the smallest interest in State affairs, and devoting his entire time to amusement. The Queen's policy was revealed in the words which he addressed to her when he announced his majority to the *Parlement*: "I desire and intend that you should be in everything and everywhere, and that after me you should be the chief of my council". Clearly Marie de' Medici's power was not to end with her son's majority.

The States General, which had been granted in response to Condé's demand, were summoned to Sens for 1614. Marie used every effort to manipulate the elections and to secure the election of a body favourable to herself. She was so confident in her ability to do this that she decided to transfer the meeting to Paris. The States General of 1614 have a special interest because they were the last summoned before the momentous Assembly of 1789. They betrayed in a marked degree the weaknesses which rendered these assemblies constitutionally useless. More than ever they were dependent on the Crown, and more than ever they were divided amongst themselves. The gulfs between Paris and the Provinces and between the Gallicans and the Ultramontanes were wider than ever before. Moreover, the *paulette* had done its work by placing the representatives of the nation in a dilemma between civic and family duty. The result was that, while a few voices were raised to press the grievances of the people, they were drowned in the conflict between personal and class interests.

On the whole the *tiers état* were most to blame. They failed to press a pronouncement in favour of Gallicanism, and a declaration on the subject of the national finances; and, damped by their own failure, they refused to join the other orders in pressing the right to sit until answers were returned to the *cahiers* or lists of grievances. This division put the game into the Queen's hands; with a promise to have the *cahiers* examined she dismissed them. It was in vain after this that the *tiers état* continued to meet. The King indeed received them and promised to abolish venality

lire." Saint-Simon, "Parallèle des trois premiers Rois Bourbons" (ed. Faugère, 1880), p. 7.

of office, to set up a *Chambre de justice*, and to diminish pensions. With that they must be content to go about their business. Such was the tame ending of the last States General of the *ancien régime*.¹

The States General having failed, it remained to be seen if the *Parlement* could do any better. The opposition in the *Parlement* to the proposal to abolish venality of office was so violent that the Crown agreed to postpone the reform. But when it protested strongly against Concini and the Spanish policy, the Royal Council reprimanded it and forbade it for the future to meddle with affairs of State except by invitation of the Council.² That is to say, the *Parlement* must for the future regard itself as a judicial body, which could only become a political body by special order of the Crown.

The time had now come for the consummation of the Spanish marriage. The King went to Spain in August, 1615, and the marriage was celebrated on 28 November. To keep the malcontent princes quiet during his absence, concessions were freely made to them, and by the Treaty of Loudun (3 May, 1616) Condé acquired the governorship of Berry and other favours, together with large sums of money.³ At the same time the "Barbons" were replaced by de Vair, Barbin, and Mangot, nominees of Concini. In spite of the generous treatment that he had received, Condé, provoked by the rise of Concini, headed a league against the favourite. The Queen took her courage in both hands, arrested the Prince in the Louvre, and flung him into the Bastille (1 September, 1616).

The greatest danger now arose from the fact that the rebels were making use of the Franco-Spanish *entente* to rally to their side all the enemies of Spain—in particular the German Protestant princes. Of these rebels, Bouillon, to whose intrigues in the reign of Henry IV reference has been made in the last chapter⁴ and who was well placed, at Sedan,

¹ Picot, "Histoire des États Généraux" (1872), Vol. IV, 283.

² Normand, "La Bourgeoisie française au XVII^e siècle" (1908), p. 252.

³ Treaty or Edict of Loudun. Richelieu, "Mémoires," op. cit. vii. 108. The Condé articles were secret. The peace cost the King more than 6,000,000 *livres*.

⁴ *Supra*, p. 123.

for political operations in Germany, was the most conspicuous.

Richelieu, then Bishop of Luçon, had joined the Ministry in 1616, and in his instructions to the French Ambassadors in that year we get the first glimpse of the true successor of Henry IV, the man who was destined to carry out the humiliation of the Habsburgs, which that monarch had planned. "No Catholic," he said, "is so blind as to reckon . . . a Spaniard better politically than a French Huguenot."¹ But for the present Richelieu was no more than a subordinate member of the Ministry.

It was not only in the direction of Germany that politics were troubled; in Italy, Venice and Savoy were uniting against Spanish domination. Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, fisher in waters which he did not hesitate to trouble for the purposes of his own fishing, had extracted a promise of support from Henry IV, and the death of the King and the reversal of his policy by the Regent had been a sore blow to him. Nevertheless, on the death of his son-in-law, the Duke of Mantua, he had laid hands on the Marquisate of Montferrat, a part of the Mantuan heritage which he specially coveted. At the same moment Venice was falling foul of the Habsburgs over maritime questions, and on 21 June, 1615, Venice and Savoy made an alliance in the Treaty of Asti. Holland and certain of the Swiss Protestant Cantons offered help, but the Catholic Cantons adhered to the Habsburgs. At this juncture much depended on the right of access to the Valtelline pass. France had an arrangement with the Grisons by which the pass was closed to all save French troops,² and in view of the pro-Spanish policy of Marie de' Medici it was impossible to alter the arrangement in favour of the enemy of Spain. But when the old Huguenot leader, Lesdiguières, now governor of Dauphiné, led French troops across the Alps (19 December) to the assistance of Savoy, nothing was done to recall him.³

¹ Richelieu, "Mémoires," op. cit. VII. p. 140.

² *Supra*, p. 127.

³ "Tant mieux," said Louis XIII, "cela fera baisser le nez aux Espagnols" (Hanoëux, "Richelieu," op. cit. II, 1. 154).

Richelieu made a great effort to retain the friendship of Venice, while refusing her demand for the use of the Valtelline, and was much chagrined when she began to negotiate with Madrid.

Meanwhile the Government, though it was successful in repressing the revolts of the princes, was losing ground from the unpopularity of its patron. Concini, who had become Marshal and Marquis d'Ancre, suffered from the fact that he was a foreigner and a favourite. Richelieu (who is, however, naturally lenient to his patron) paints him in not unpleasant colours.¹ His first end, he acknowledges, was to raise his own fortune, but he also desired to raise that of the State, and to crush the princes—especially Lorraine. But, as his wife remarked, "he was carrying too much sail for so small a vessel". By 1616 his insolence had made him the object of widespread hatred. If this hatred had been confined to the discontented nobles it might not have mattered, but it had extended to a neglected but more dangerous quarter. The young King, deliberately excluded from public affairs and completely absorbed in childish pastimes, had long been written down as a complete nonentity. When he could not hunt he amused himself with toys. It is interesting to reflect that the Queen's malign subordination of her son was her own undoing. For it was by pandering to the childish tastes to which she had condemned him that the man rose to power who was to be the cause of her overthrow. Marie had introduced to Court an accomplished Provençal sportsman named Luynes to superintend the King's amusements. Luynes invented a new amusement—hawking small birds in the galleries on wet days—and he quickly inspired his young master with such a warm affection that Louis could think of no one else, and was overheard murmuring in his sleep, "Luynes, Luynes". It was Luynes who gradually introduced into his master's mind the hatred for Concini which was now to bear fruit. The crisis occurred on 24 April, 1617. Concini was shot in the courtyard of the Louvre by Vitry, captain of the Guard, acting on instructions received direct

¹ "Mémoires," op. cit. VII. 169 sqq.

from the King.¹ When they brought the news to Marie de' Medici she realized at once what it meant. "Ohimé!" she said. "I have reigned seven years; now I only look for a heavenly crown." Poor Leonora d'Ancre's end was tragic; she was condemned as a sorceress, and executed on 8 July, meeting her death with great courage. On 3 May, the Queen Mother was exiled to the Castle of Blois.

"The tavern was not changed" by this *coup d'état*, "only the sign." The King recalled the Barbons whom Concini had degraded, but the bulk of the power, especially after the death of Villeroy, fell to Luynes, who got himself made peer and duke, and placed cohorts of his relations in places of honour and emolument.² To mark the King's assumption of power by some show of popular reform, the new Government summoned an Assembly of Notables to Rouen (4 December) and submitted to it a number of reforms of justice, administration, and taxation. Amongst these was the abolition of the *paulette*, and this time the abuse was actually suppressed (15 January, 1618); but in face of the outcry of the magistrates the edict was not put in force.

Luynes' rapid rise gave much offence, and a considerable number of the nobles, including the aged but overbearing d'Épernon, left Paris and entered into relations with the Queen at Blois. Marie escaped by a rope ladder from an upper window of the Chateau of Blois—no inconsiderable feat for a person of her corpulence—and joined the rebels at Angoulême. The King and Luynes, greatly alarmed, made terms with her (Treaty of Angoulême), considerably modifying the rigour of her captivity.

¹ A detailed account of the death of the Marshal and attendant circumstances, supposed to be by Michel de Marillac, is found in Michaud et Poujoulat, "Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires," Ser. II, v., pp. 447 *sqq.*

² Richelieu, "Mémoires," op. cit. vii. 183, for Luynes' ambitions. He wanted to be Prince of Orange, Count of Avignon, Duke of Albret, King of Austrasia, and would not have refused more if he had seen his way to it.

Compare with the note in "Maximes d'état et fragments politiques de Cardinal de Richelieu," ed. Hanotaux (1880), p. 29, in which it is suggested that Luynes actually hoped for the reversion of the Crown itself.

Marie, however, was soon persuaded to join the rebel nobles again, but in the battle (or *drólerie*, as it was called) of Ponts de Cé (7 August) the royal troops were easily victorious, and once more the Queen was leniently treated in the Treaty of Angers (10 August), a confirmation of the *status quo*. D'Épernon and the political rebels also accepted terms, and the King was free to turn his arms against the Protestants; unless, indeed, it might occur to him to bury the religious hatchet at home and to turn his attention to the European interests of France. The death of the Emperor Matthias (1619) and the candidature of the Archduke Ferdinand of Styria for the imperial throne re-opened the vital question of the future of the house of Habsburg; a strong Protestant opposition to Ferdinand was organized by the Elector Palatine, Frederick, supported by the Bohemian Protestants, by Mansfeld and the Army of the Union, as well as by Holland and England. Ferdinand's election¹ evoked a great outburst of German Protestant feeling, and for a moment the new Emperor was blockaded in his own capital.

Both sides claimed the support of France, and this was her great opportunity for carrying out her true anti-Burgundian policy of antagonism to the Habsburgs. But Luynes had no wide conception of foreign policy, was, moreover, deeply enmeshed in the ultra-Catholic net; he was incapable of that subtle balance between religious and political ends which had been understood by Henry IV, and was gradually coming to be understood by Richelieu in his retirement. It is doubtful if he foresaw the consequences of the Treaty of Ulm, which he now negotiated (3 July, 1620) and which stipulated a mutual abandonment of hostilities by the Catholic and Protestant Powers of Germany with the specified exceptions of Austria and Bohemia. Thus France "came to the rescue of her mortal enemy".² The unfortunate Frederick, "the

¹ 28 August, 1619.

² This was the expression used by Bouillon in a memoir addressed to the Court of France. Bouillon urged that the Habsburgs were in the toils, and were trying to escape by raising the religious and monarchical bogey: appealing to principles because they lacked strength (*quand la*

Winter King," who had been raised to the throne of Bohemia,¹ was annihilated in the Battle of the White Hill by the army of the Catholic League led by Maximilian of Bavaria and Tilly (8 November, 1621). Luynes' fatal blunder had lost the opportunity of staving off the Thirty Years War, and all the valour of Gustavus, Condé, and Turenne, and all the wisdom of Richelieu and Mazarin would not remedy his mistake.

Soon after (25 April, 1621) the Treaty of Madrid was signed with Spain. Both problems of the Habsburg question had been hung up in order that internal religious strife might be renewed. One of the conditions of the absolution of Henry IV had been the restoration of Catholicism in Béarn. This condition had been but very partially carried out, but in 1617, Louis XIII had ordered the restoration to the Church of its property in that district. The Protestants objected, and after the peace of Angers Louis XIII led troops into Béarn and restored Catholicism. The Protestants assembled at la Rochelle in December, and made preparations for a general rising. Many of their leaders, however, viewed their disloyal tendencies with alarm, and now returned to the Catholic fold, and the Huguenots entered on this struggle of 1620 with weakened and disunited forces. Luynes (now Constable) led the royal forces against Saumur, Saint-Jean d'Angély and Montauban (18 August, 1621); but the favourite was a faint-hearted soldier, and his death on 15 December probably only anticipated his disgrace. In him Catholic Europe lost a valuable support, while France was the richer by the removal of a man who had no perception of her national requirements. The stage was gradually clearing for Richelieu.

Louis was not much grieved at his favourite's death; but he felt the need of some one at his side, and now turned once more to his mother. Sillery, aged and incompetent, was brought back to power with his no more estimable son Puisieux. This ministry soon earned a well-merited contempt.

force lui manque) and this at a moment when the Elector Palatine, the traditional ally of France, had them at his mercy. Bouillon, at any rate, appreciated the political situation.

¹ He was crowned on 4 November.

Condé, who had long since been released, was restored to favour. He had recently accepted the Catholic religion and pressed the need for a renewal of hostilities against the Huguenots. Marie de' Medici, prompted by Richelieu, implored the King to "consider, before plunging into civil war, whether it was just, possible, and advantageous".¹ Condé, however, carried the day, and in March, 1622, the King set out for the front, defeated Soubise, and swept south-western France from la Rochelle to Montpellier. But Rohan held out with fierce determination in the latter feeble city, and on 9 October Louis XIII agreed to terms. By the Peace of Montpellier the Huguenot *places de sûreté* were reduced to two—la Rochelle and Montauban.

The year 1623 was wretched and disgraceful. The King, on poor terms with his sprightly wife and twice disappointed in the hope of an heir, moped and sulked. Marie de' Medici continued to present the councils of Richelieu to her son, protesting vigorously against the passage through France of the Prince of Wales on his romantic errand to the Spanish Court; the voice was hers, but the hand was Richelieu's. On 31 December, 1623, the King dismissed Sillery and promoted la Vieuville, another mediocrity. La Vieuville introduced Richelieu into office in a subordinate capacity; but directly he entered the Council Richelieu claimed precedence over his colleagues, and even over the Princes of the Blood,² on the ground of his ecclesiastical dignity. He had intrigued himself into a cardinal's hat in 1622.

Richelieu's access to power marks a great change in the policy of France, and her position in Europe. Let us consider for a moment the character and antecedents of the statesman and the nature of the problems he set himself to solve. Richelieu was born in 1585, and was thus thirty-eight years old when he definitely came into power. He was of poor but noble birth, and had been raised to the Bishopric of Luçon in 1607. He had played a considerable rôle in the States General of 1614, and two years later had entered the Council of State as the protégé of Marie de' Medici and the Marquis d'Ancre,

¹ Richelieu, "Mémoires," op. cit. vii. 260.

² See Richelieu's "Lettres," op. cit. ii. 6.

whose downfall he shared in 1617. During the Queen Mother's exile he had played a very equivocal but not dishonourable part; his energies were directed to preventing her from throwing herself into the arms of the rebel nobles (d'Épernon and his friends) or from identifying herself with Luynes, whose policy he detested, and whose disgrace he foresaw. He was instrumental in the modified reconciliation of the King and his mother in 1620; but even after the fall of Luynes and the restoration to favour of Marie de' Medici, the King had been reluctant to give him office, and for some years Richelieu had to be content to use Marie de' Medici as his mouthpiece in the councils of State, until, as we have seen, he was given subordinate office in 1624, and by clever finesse used his ecclesiastical precedence to secure for himself the chief position in the Council.

The problem that confronted Richelieu was the same which had confronted Henry IV, the subordination of the internal religious quarrel to the external political quarrel. Before this task the mediocrities of the early years of the reign had succumbed, with the result that the danger from the Habsburgs in Spain and Austria was greater than ever. The question had become too complicated to admit of a simple solution. Logic is no monopoly of clear and brutal thinkers; it is possible also to employ it in an elaborate policy of checks and balances. To keep the issue clear while employing such a policy is the highest task of statesmanship, and it is in this that Richelieu stands pre-eminent. Subtlety can be the undoing of a ruler, as it had been, for instance, of Catherine de' Medici, because she was subtle for subtlety's sake, and the policy which underlay her doubling and twisting had never been clearly thought out; and to double and twist without a definite goal is mere waste of time. Subtlety was to be the salvation of Richelieu, because he used it for a definite end, and never allowed the intricacies of his manœuvres to obscure that end.

He has told us himself what were the objects at which he aimed—to ruin the Huguenots as a political force, to repress the pride of the nobles, and to raise France to her

proper position in Europe. To repress the nobles was a comparatively easy task ; disunited, unpatriotic, and discredited, they easily succumbed, and it is even possible to argue that in this respect the Cardinal went too far ; for in abolishing the powerful governors of provinces he cleared the way for the hypercentralization of Louis XIV, which, condemning the aristocracy as it did to a position of irresponsible privilege, deprived the nation of their services. The matter of the Protestants was far more difficult. In the privileged position secured to them by the Edict of Nantes the Huguenots were a standing menace to a State whose being was bound up with Catholicism. From their guaranteed *places de sûreté* they could and did plot for the dismemberment of their country, and could and did intrigue with foreign powers hostile to France. The religious question was, in fact, inextricably involved with the other two. The Huguenots cleverly fostered confusion between religion and politics, and it was in their capacity of political intriguers, and not in that of religious irreconcilables, that Richelieu aspired to ruin them. It was against political disintegration and not against religious freedom that he set his face. His desire was to appear at home as the champion not of religious but of political unity ; abroad not as the champion of Protestantism but as the political opponent of the Habsburgs. In the world of politics, which alone had reality for him, religion was an important element, but never an end in itself ; accused of allying with Protestants he would take la Rochelle ; accused of persecuting heretics, he would ally himself with Sweden, the Palatinate, and the United Provinces. This idea of the subordination of religion to politics was still a new one, and not generally understood, but Richelieu never lost sight of it, and continued to use religious enthusiasm for the furtherance of his political ideal—the aggrandizement of France. In its essentials, Richelieu’s foreign policy was supremely right, and he set the lines on which French foreign policy was based for centuries. The idea of a French clientele in Western Germany was not originated by him, it had been in existence since Henry II,¹ but Richelieu made it

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 35.

permanent, and it continued with increasing force down to the Rheinbund of 1806. Elsewhere it will be necessary to record in what respects Richelieu failed; in his internal administration by his want of sympathy, and his impatience and failure to understand the requirements of France; in his failure to create, or even to perceive, the need for the material for popular government, and in his incapacity for detail. But these failures, terrible as they were, must not blind us to the grandeur and permanence of his conceptions in the sphere of foreign politics.

At the moment when Richelieu took office the European situation was extremely grave. The terrible Thirty Years War had begun; Maximilian of Bavaria, Tilly, and the army of the League were pursuing their victorious career in Germany. Frederick had been driven out of the Palatinate, the Protestant "Union" had been dissolved, and the accession of Maximilian of Bavaria to Electoral dignity (13 February, 1623) had increased the Catholic majority in the Electoral College. On the other hand, the Spanish Habsburgs had received a check in the breaking off of the Anglo-Spanish match, and Richelieu hastened to turn this to account by the marriage of Charles I to Louis XIII's sister Henrietta Maria of France (May, 1625). He had the good sense to propitiate Catholic feeling by exacting from England a guarantee for the protection of English Catholics.¹ By alliance with the Protestant powers of the North he hoped to be able to check the advance of the two branches of the house of Habsburg. An alliance was also made with the Dutch (20 July, 1624, Treaty of Compiègne), but again on the understanding that certain guarantees should be given to French Catholics in Holland. Richelieu in these treaties sounded the key-note of his policy; covert opposition to the Habsburgs, reconciliation with the Protestant powers, with careful checks against any truckling to the Huguenots at home.

The first clash of arms with the Habsburgs occurred in

¹ "Lettres," op. cit. II. 53. In the end Charles I was unable to fulfil these guarantees, and the result was an estrangement between England and France.

Italy. Ever since the Italian wars it had been the policy of France to keep the Alpine passes shut, especially against the Habsburgs, and when, by the division of Charles V's dominions, the Spanish, Italian, and Burgundian possessions of the Habsburgs passed to the Spanish branch, it became all the more important to hold the passes against the Spaniards, and so prevent the junction of their "Burgundian" and Italian forces. Of these passes the most important—because the only one not commanded by either Spain or Savoy—was the Valtelline; that which led into Italy by the Adda Valley from the Engadine, and the Upper Inn. Possession of that valley would have brought Milan within fifteen days' march of Flanders and ten of Vienna: and for many years the French had enjoyed the exclusive right to use the valley, a right which had been confirmed by the Treaty of Soleure (1602).¹ In 1513 the Valtellinois (a Catholic people) were placed by Maximilian Sforza under the suzerainty of the Protestant Grisons League, and the antagonism between that League and the Valtellinois had been used as a lever by the powers interested in the control of the pass. Amongst others Venice wanted to open the Valtelline for the passage of the reinforcements which she hoped to draw from Northern Europe to assist her in her struggle against Spain. In 1603 she had extracted the privilege from the Valtellinois, and Spain, as we know, had responded by building a powerful fortress (Fort Fuentes) at the mouth of the pass. In 1620, at the moment when Louis XIII and Luynes were congratulating themselves on their trifling victory at Les Ponts de Cé, the Spaniards asserted their authority in this all-important region. Luynes, who was quite blind to the significance of the matter, had signed the Treaty of Madrid on 25 April, 1621, which left Spain with a foothold in the Valtelline. In 1622 the Grisons were driven out and Spain got control of the valley. France allied herself with Venice and Savoy, and in 1624, rejecting a papal arbitration on the ground that it was too favourable to Spain, these allies recovered the Valtelline by force of arms, after which

¹ *Supra*, p. 127.

Lesdiguières, with French troops, aided Savoy in a descent on Genoa, the close ally of Spain.

By a curious nemesis the Spaniards were now driven to look to their old enemies, the Huguenots, to create the needed diversion, thus, like their adversaries, ignoring the religious in favour of the political issue. The Huguenots protested that the Treaty of Montpellier had not been observed, and in 1625 Soubise, one of the most powerful of the Huguenot nobles, who had already attacked the Île de Rhè, captured with his private fleet a number of royal vessels in the harbour of Blavet.¹ At the same moment Rohan raised a revolt in Languedoc.² Richelieu at once applied to England and Holland for ships.³ Montmorency gained a naval victory over the Huguenots, and the rebels began to sue for peace.

Richelieu now played the double game of negotiating, on the one hand with the Huguenots, on the other with Spain, and bringing pressure to bear on each by the threatened defection of the other. On 5 February, 1626, peace was made with the Huguenots, and on 10 May the Treaty of Monçon was signed with Spain; the Valtelline being handed back to the Grisons, while Catholic privileges were secured to the Valtellinois. Thus by judicious diplomacy Richelieu secured his point; the alliance between Spain and the Huguenots had been broken up, and the road was opened for the isolation and extermination of the latter.⁴

Richelieu's apparent tenderness to the Huguenots provoked the extreme Catholics, and a great conspiracy, which included almost all the Princes of the Blood, headed by

¹ Port-Louis.

² Early in 1625. "Never was there so good an opportunity for the King to augment his power and clip the wings of his enemies" (Richelieu, "Lettres," *op. cit.* II. 80).

³ 1 June, 1625. How important it is that there should be no alliance between England and Spain (*ibid.* II. 90).

⁴ It was in 24 July, 1626, that he wrote: "If God grants me six months of life I shall die happy, seeing the pride of Spain abased, your allies maintained, the Huguenots daunted, all factions dissipated, peace established in this kingdom, a close union in your domestic household, and your name glorious throughout the world" ("Lettres," *op. cit.* II. 225).

Gaston of Orleans, the King's brother, took place. Richelieu nipped it in the bud. Most of the leaders were pardoned, but, to make an example, the Count of Chalais, a young man who had played quite a minor part, was singled out and ruthlessly executed, while the abolition of the offices of Constable and Admiral deprived the princes of two positions from which they might have threatened the monarchy. Richelieu got the King to make him "grand master and general superintendent of navigation and commerce," and in that capacity devoted much time to the development of the navy and the commerce of the kingdom.

For the moment it looked as if the Cardinal had overreached himself, for if the extreme Catholics had been angered at his leniency to the Huguenots, the Protestant powers were equally indignant over his accommodation with Spain. Left in the lurch by the Treaty of Monçon they were naturally furious.¹ England, guided by the unstable Buckingham, determined to show her resentment openly.² Buckingham announced himself the champion of the Huguenots,³ and on 27 June, 1627, sailed at the head of a considerable naval force. But the Huguenots, who had not been consulted, at first resented the arrival of this uninvited champion. Rohan, however, once more raised Languedoc, while Lorraine, Savoy, and Venice were only waiting a favourable moment to join in the set against France. Buckingham blockaded the royal fortresses which commanded la Rochelle, and it became necessary for the royalists to take the Protestant stronghold. To block the harbour the Cardinal, with infinite labour, caused to be constructed a great breakwater, the remains of which are still visible at low tide, and surrounded the city with immense earthworks on the landward side. Repeated attempts were made by the English fleet in 1628 to force an entrance and

¹ For Savoy and the Treaty of Monçon see Richelieu, "Lettres," op. cit. II. 205 and 216.

² *Ibid.* II. 243.

³ The championship of the Huguenots by England may not have been entirely unconnected with the remembrance of their ancient claims in the South-West of France. See Richelieu, "Maximes d'état," op. cit. pp. 8, 9.

revictual the town—but in vain. The besieged held out with admirable determination until, on 29 October, 1628, famine at length obliged them to capitulate.

The Protestant stronghold had not fallen a moment too soon, for a fresh complication had arisen in Italy on the death of the Duke of Mantua (26 December, 1627). The Duchy, and with it Montferrat, had been inherited by a French subject, the Duke of Nevers.¹ But the succession was widely disputed. Spain declared war and called on the Emperor to exercise his right of institution to the prejudice of Nevers. She was joined by Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, who claimed Montferrat and desired to avenge himself for the Treaty of Monçon. Savoy held the passes against the French, while Spain laid siege to Casale, the most important fortress in the Duchy. This crisis convinced Richelieu of the necessity for leaving Rohan alone for the time being, and the moment la Rochelle had fallen he urged his master to move with all speed towards Italy. King and Cardinal left Paris on 15 January, 1629, and, having failed to win over Charles Emmanuel, forced their way into Italy by Mont Genève and Susa, and threatened Turin. Charles Emmanuel at once came to terms (3 March) and Casale was relieved. Richelieu established an anti-Spanish Italian League which included Venice, Mantua, and Savoy and which had the tacit approval of the Pope, and then turned to complete the destruction of the Protestants at home.

Disheartened by the loss of la Rochelle, the Huguenots now took the extreme step of allying themselves with Spain, and Rohan became as fully the pensioner of Philip IV as Guise had been of Philip II. Louis XIII, besieged, took, and destroyed Privas (May), the chief Protestant stronghold in the Rhône Valley and compelled Rohan to sue for peace; and this time it was peace on altered conditions. No more *places de sûreté*—every fortress that had resisted must be razed; no more tolerance of rebels—the leaders of the revolt must be treated as traitors, not as religious opponents. Rohan himself

¹ Charles of Gonzago Duke of Nevers was a cadet of the ducal house of Mantua. See genealogical table, *supra*, p. 86.

must go into exile. With these important modifications the Edict of Nantes was re-established in the Peace of Alais or *Paix de Grâce* (28 June, 1629).

The *Paix de Grâce* was Richelieu's solution of the religious question. So long as the Huguenot opposition was purely religious he had been ready to meet it with toleration, directly it became political, he was determined to crush it with all the rigours of which he was master. He now declared to the Huguenot ministers that, since they had become good subjects of the King, no distinction would be made between Catholics and Protestants. And he was staunch to this promise. Strong Churchman though he was, he recognized the folly of attempting to stamp out religious convictions just as much as he recognized the necessity for crushing civil rebellion. His dispassionate attitude towards the Huguenot question and his capacity for distinguishing between its political and religious aspects are the best testimony to the logical clearness of his brain. All his life he was a sincere, even credulous, Catholic. He surrounded himself with priests and gave to Churchmen the highest places both at Court and in the Army and Navy. He associated himself with the remarkable religious revival of which Saint Vincent de Paul was the apostle.¹ But he was no Erastian, and he was as opposed to the extreme Gallican as he was to the persecuting Jesuit. This clear-headed tolerance was the finest trait in his character. The results of this year may be summarized in the Cardinal's own words: "The King had besieged and taken la Rochelle, defeated the English who wished to succour it, braved the forts and passes of Savoy in the face of natural obstacles, and defended by Spain and Germany and Italy; delivered Casale by the mere breath of

¹ Saint Vincent de Paul (1576-1660), a Gascon priest, founded the order of the Lazarists, secular priests, whose special work was missions to country districts. He also established many charitable confraternities for the care of the sick and the aged poor, for the education of girls and the nursing of sick galley slaves in the hospital which he founded at Marseilles. Perhaps his best known work was the foundation of the Foundling Hospital (*Enfants Trouvés*) in Paris.

the reputation of his arms, and by that tempest cleared the sky of Italy and assured its repose. After which he had returned to give the *coup de grâce* to the rebel Huguenots." Truly a remarkable year.

The Cardinal, who had joined his master in Languedoc, returned to Paris to find that success brings enemies. The Queen Mother, who had no sense of patriotism and to whom policy was a matter of caprice, saw in Richelieu's policy only injuries to herself and the Spanish-Catholic interests with which she was identified. Speculating on the childlessness of the King, she had allied herself with Gaston, the heir-presumptive, backed his demand for the governorship of Champagne and Burgundy, and resented its refusal. She had her own dynastic connexions much at heart, and, as she had daughters married to Savoy whom Richelieu had hoodwinked, to Spain whom he had outplayed, and to England with whom he was on doubtful terms, she conceived herself to have been deeply injured by him. Richelieu offered to resign; and this so upset the King that the Queen Mother saw that she must give way, and Richelieu emerged from the crisis more firmly established than ever and with the title of *premier ministre d'état* (21 November, 1629).

He attempted to rally Gaston to loyalty by promising him the Governorship of Amboise and Orleans (2 January, 1630). The reconciliation was opportune, for Italy was once more aflame. Charles Emmanuel, disgusted at his treatment, had secretly stirred up the Emperor to vindicate his right of institution in Mantua, and imperial troops now occupied the Grisons and threatened Italy. At the same time the Spaniards despatched their most famous general—Spinola—to renew the attack on Casale. In October he invaded Montferrat, and at the same time the imperial army (under Colalto) laid siege to Mantua. Richelieu saw that France must intervene, and in December he recrossed the Alps (December, 1629). His first step was to call on Charles Emmanuel to fulfil his treaty obligations, and when the latter began his usual protestations the Cardinal cut them short by seizing the fortress of Pignerolo (23 March, 1630), thus securing for France a new entrance

into Italy, via Mont Genève—all the more important because the imperialists were in possession of the Valtelline pass. To crush Savoy and secure the passes into Italy was in fact far more vital to France than to establish Nevers in Mantua or to preside over the partition of Montferrat. Richelieu therefore watched with equanimity the fall of Mantua and the failure of Schomberg to relieve Casale. The capture of Chambéry (17 May) and that of Saluzzo (20 July, 1630) were of far more importance to France than either. Six days after the latter event the old fox Charles Emmanuel died and Louis XIII's sister Christina became reigning Duchess of Savoy. On 4 September, by papal mediation, a brief truce was arranged between the combatants in Italy. Soon after (September) Louis XIII fell so ill that his life was despaired of. Richelieu knew that if his master died his career would be at an end. "Je ne scay si je suis mort ou vif," he wrote; but gradually the King recovered and the Cardinal was able to breathe again.

Meanwhile events in Central Europe were reacting upon the position in Italy, and, as we are now entering the period when Richelieu began to take an active, though covert, share in German affairs, the moment has come when we should take stock of the situation in that quarter. For twelve years Germany had been convulsed by the terrible religious struggle, the earlier stages of which have already been noticed.¹ For two years after the Battle of the White Hill Maximilian of Bavaria and Tilly harassed the German Protestants with ruthless zeal, and when Christian of Denmark was called in by the Protestant powers of the North, Tilly swept him from the field. Now, although the League and Maximilian and Tilly had originally been called in to fight the Emperor's battles, their wonderful success told more in favour of the Church, the Catholic League, and Bavaria than in favour of Ferdinand II, or the Empire. Ferdinand had, in fact, been quite eclipsed by his protectors. He therefore—through the medium of that strange genius Wallenstein—raised a rival imperial force with which Wallenstein himself threw Tilly's

¹ *Supra*, pp. 143, 144.

victories into the shade and saved the Emperor from his friends. Tilly, having pounded the Protestants for the benefit of the Church, Wallenstein now, from 1625-1629, pounded them for the benefit of the Empire, and in the latter year cleared Germany of the Danes (Treaty of Lübeck) and enabled the Emperor to publish the Edict of Restitution (March, 1629) with which he hoped to capture Catholic opinion by decreeing the restitution to the Catholic Church of all secularized Church lands.

This revival of the imperial ascendancy alarmed Richelieu; hitherto, although he had always had one eye on Vienna, his energies had been ostensibly directed against the Spanish Habsburgs: now he saw that in face of the menace from Vienna he must fight the Habsburgs (or get others to fight them for him) in Germany as well as in Italy. At the moment of Charles Emmanuel's death the imperial Diet of Ratisbon was sitting; it had been summoned by Ferdinand II in order that it might vote the crown of Rome to his son. To the Diet France sent two representatives—Brûlart de Léon and Richelieu's astute confidant, Father Joseph. They were instrumental in securing the dismissal of Wallenstein, by which the Emperor simply disarmed himself at a critical moment, and also in arranging an Italian settlement on lines favourable to France. The Duke of Mantua (Nevers) was to apologize and receive the imperial investiture, the Grisons were to be evacuated and all conquests restored. Savoy and Guastalla were to receive compensation in Montferrat. But when they agreed to submit to arbitration the question of the Three Bishoprics and to include Lorraine in the settlement, the French representatives went, or at least Richelieu pretended that they went, beyond their powers (13 October).

By very cunning diplomacy the Cardinal managed to secure a revision of this settlement. He hurried off an envoy to Italy to arrange terms with the belligerents there. This was done in the Treaty of Cherasco (19 June).¹ At the same time he negotiated a secret treaty with Savoy by which, in re-

¹ This was the date of the final treaty; the first treaty signed 6 April fell through owing to technical irregularities.

turn for an alliance with France and a guarantee of the coveted lands in Montferrat, Victor Amadeus guaranteed to France, Pignerolo, and the Valley of La Perosa, in spite of any treaties made or to be made,¹ thus abandoning his position of doorkeeper to Italy.

Richelieu had profited by the mediation of the Pope, who had come to the conclusion that his best security against Spanish domination was to provide France with free ingress to the peninsula; he had profited also by the readiness of Savoy to abandon her frontier mission in order to gratify her ambition for territorial aggrandizement: most of all he had profited by the storm cloud in Germany. Had he not been harassed by the gathering complications in that quarter, Ferdinand could hardly have submitted to be thrust aside as he was in the Italian settlement of 1631. The landing of the Swedes in Rügen in March, 1630, had been a turning point in the German struggle; this intervention had been encouraged by Richelieu: his kinsman, Charnacé, had helped to negotiate the Treaty of Altmark which ended the Swedo-Polish war and freed Sweden for intervention in Germany. While France was ending the war of the Mantuan succession, Gustavus Adolphus was establishing his bases in Mecklenburg and Stettin, and preparing for the active interference which was to make the year 1631 famous.

Meanwhile Marie de' Medici played her last card. On 10 November, 1630, in a private interview with her son, she urged him to dismiss the Cardinal. She was interrupted by the entrance of Richelieu himself. There followed a scene of violent recrimination: Marie de' Medici stormed at Richelieu who replied with humility and tears and proffers of resignation. When the Cardinal retired he thought that he had lost. Marie de' Medici was triumphant; from all sides congratulations and adherences poured in. But Louis XIII, once rid of his mother's presence, recalled Richelieu's services. He sent for him to come to Versailles and restored him to favour. Marie de' Medici, bitterly disappointed, once more began to plot with her second son. But Richelieu recognized that his

¹ This was six days before the Treaty of Cherasco.

old patron must be firmly treated. She was sent under supervision to Compiègne. On 18 July, 1631, she escaped and fled to Flanders, Gaston having previously crossed the frontier. To take refuge with the enemies of France was of course unpardonable. The Queen was never suffered to return. She died at Cologne on 3 July, 1642. Marie de' Medici's influence during her twenty years of activity had been pernicious in the extreme. It has been said of her with no more than truth that she had only to see a bad cause to make it her own. She had steadily opposed the anti-Habsburg policy which her husband had bequeathed to his successor, had played the game of the Spaniards almost as whole-heartedly as Guise had played it, and had set the tone of frivolous and selfish opposition which was to develop into the scandalous and contemptible episode of the *Frondes*.

Richelieu was now completely established in power. The "Day of Dupes" set the seal on his ascendancy. He was made Duke and Peer of France and Governor of Brittany (1631). But his very triumph increased his difficulties. Guise, Governor of Provence, indeed fled the country (6 August, 1631) but Montmorency raised Languedoc in revolt: Schomberg defeated and captured him at Castelnaudary (1 September, 1632) and he was executed a month later (30 October). The Habsburgs, alive to the danger of a resuscitated and hostile France, thought to defend themselves by fomenting dissensions within her borders. Gaston was easily persuaded once more to make himself the centre of a conspiracy in conjunction with Charles IV of Lorraine who aimed at clearing the French out of the "Three Bishoprics" and whose sister married Gaston (3 January, 1632). La Force and Schomberg were sent to drive the Imperialists from Moyenvic, a piece of disputed territory in the heart of the Bishoprics which had been occupied by the Emperor. This expedition was successful; on 6 January, 1632, Lorraine concluded with France the Treaty of Vic. The Duke was prosecuted for kidnapping Gaston, and the latter was brought back to France and kept in close tutelage by the Cardinal, his clandestine marriage being annulled.

The appearance in Germany of Gustavus Adolphus marked,

as has been said, a turning point in the Thirty Years War; it also marked a new phase in the development of the foreign policy of Richelieu. Hitherto France had abstained from opposition to the Emperor in Germany. There was indeed no need for her opposition so long as Tilly and Maximilian were taking the wind out of the imperial sails; for it was not France's object to defend the Protestant cause, so long as its sacrifice did not involve the ascendancy of the Habsburgs. When, with the triumphs of Wallenstein, that ascendancy began, the need for action by France arose, and we have seen that she was instrumental in bringing the Swedes into Germany. It was not to her advantage publicly to espouse the Protestant cause (which, to her, was no more than the anti-Habsburg cause), though even that she was ready to do if she could not attain her end in other ways. Meanwhile, however, her policy was to take no open share in the war, but to inspire and subsidize others to grapple with the Habsburgs, and meanwhile to insinuate herself towards the middle Rhine in every available way and to build up a French clientele among the Rhenish princes of Germany. It was this policy of covert hostility to Austria that France pursued under the guidance of Richelieu from 1629-30 to 1635, when circumstances obliged her to engage in the Thirty Years War as a principal.

Already in 1630 Richelieu had renewed the French alliance with Holland, but he had been hard put to it to devise some means of setting Gustavus Adolphus on the Emperor while sparing the Catholic League and the German Catholics generally. Gustavus was out on a mission which was religious even more than political, while France's interest in Germany was wholly political. This is the dilemma which explains the complexity of French policy in the Thirty Years War. Richelieu offered to subsidize Gustavus on condition that he directed his blows at the Emperor alone, and in the Treaty of Bärwalde (13 January, 1631) he agreed to pay a subsidy of a million *livres* per annum on condition that Gustavus should respect the neutrality of the Catholic League and not interfere with the Catholic religion in the places he might occupy. Gustavus won the splendid victory of Breitenfeld, near Leipzig, over

Tilly on 17 September, and Vienna was open to him. His decision to turn and sweep the Rhine Valley proved to Richelieu that Gustavus' heart was in the religious side of his mission. The appearance of the "Lion of the North," with the French million in his pocket, amongst the prospective German Catholic protégés of France was highly prejudicial to French interests. Richelieu pressed him to keep at least to the right bank, but he refused. Gustavus offered the tempting bait of Lorraine (Louis XIII was already there), Luxemburg, Flanders, and Alsace; but religious scruples, and the fear of alienating the Catholic powers as well as of offending the Catholic sensibilities of France, caused Richelieu to reject it. The Cardinal acknowledged that he was in a great dilemma at this moment. He "feared the prejudice to religion," and whatever council he might adopt saw that "great evil or great good might result from it".¹ It was the influence of Father Joseph that decided him to refuse the tempting offers of Gustavus (6 January, 1632).² The triumphal progress of the Swedish King along the Rhine was not, however, without profit to France. It decided the elector of Trier, since no imperial help could be looked for, to accept the protection of France (9 April, 1632) and it was instrumental in bringing Lorraine to accept the Treaty of Vic by which France got a good foothold in that country. This foothold was soon extended. In the Treaty of Liverdun (26 June, 1632) Lorraine did homage for Bar, sold to France the county of Clermont, and placed important fortresses in French hands.

Gustavus Adolphus now turned on Bavaria and forced the passage of the Lech (where Tilly received his death-wound). France was embarrassed rather than aided by the forward movement of the Swedes, and Louis XIII declared that "the Goth must be stopped". He was stopped all too effectively. The Emperor recalled Wallenstein and sent him to oppose the conquering Swede. The armies met at Lützen on 16 November, and Gustavus was killed in the moment of victory. His death saved the Empire, deprived France of an ally

¹ "Mémoires," op. cit. VIII. 434.

² Fagniez, "Le Père Joseph et Richelieu" (1894), Vol. I, ch. ix.

whose success was becoming embarrassing, and confronted her with the need for fresh combinations. She was still anxious to avoid entering the war as a principal, and her policy after the death of Gustavus was to encourage other Protestant powers to maintain the struggle: but at all costs she was obliged to make sure that these powers did not make peace on their own account and leave her in the lurch. Rather than permit this she must confront the necessity for throwing herself into the struggle as a principal, as she was to do in 1635. The Confederation of Heilbronn (13 April, 1633) brought the four western circles of Germany into alliance with the Swedes, and by the Treaty of Frankfort (August) France lent her weight to this alliance. Meanwhile Richelieu entered into negotiations with Wallenstein. The famous commander betrayed the Emperor, and his treachery led to his assassination.

Remaining outside the general war, France pursued her policy of absorbing Lorraine. The Duke had not observed the terms of the Treaty of Liverdun and had subsequently abdicated in favour of his brother, the Bishop of Toul. The French occupied the Duchy, and on 25 September, 1634, entered Nancy, one of the finest fortresses in Europe.¹ From this time forward Lorraine might almost be regarded as a French Province. The first definite step in the direction of the Rhine had been taken.

The year 1634 was one of disaster for Protestant arms in Germany. A long series of reverses led to the crushing defeat of Nördlingen, in which the Swedish General Horn and Bernard of Saxe-Weimar were defeated (5 and 6 September). Pressure was brought upon France to make her declare war; but in the Treaty of Paris (1 November) France guaranteed her support only on condition that Saxony and Brandenburg would make no separate treaty with the enemy; and all the world already knew that Saxony was negotiating with the Emperor. In return for this somewhat equivocal guarantee Alsace was conditionally handed to France. But Oxenstiern, the Swedish Chancellor, refused to ratify the Treaty.

¹ It was in this war that Turenne (about 23) first made his mark.

Military reverses, however, the loss of Philippsburg, Sierck, and Trier (January and March), and above all the Treaty of Prague, by which, in return for the withdrawal of the Edict of Restitution and concessions to the Protestant princes, the Emperor secured the support of Saxony and Hesse Darmstadt and most of the Protestant princes, convinced Richelieu that the time had come when France must throw off the mask and enter the war as a principal. On 28 April, an offensive and defensive alliance with Sweden was concluded at Compiègne, and on 19 May war was declared by France on Spain.¹ Richelieu's desire to preserve an appearance of peace with the Emperor is proved by the fact that it was on Spain only that he declared war. It was not till 1638 that war was declared on Austria.

From the diplomatic point of view France entered the conflict under favourable auspices. The Peace of Prague indeed had brought all the Catholic and Lutheran princes of Germany back to the imperial fold, but it had also driven all the Calvinists of Germany to look to France for protection. Sweden was a definite ally. So also was Holland, who by two treaties (15 April, 1634 and 8 February, 1635) pledged herself to offensive and defensive alliance with France on the basis of a partition of the Spanish Netherlands.² The prospect of an anti-Spanish rising in the Netherlands encouraged the allies to hope for results in this quarter. In Italy the Treaty of Rivoli (11 July, 1635) brought Savoy, after many hesitations, once more on to the side of France, and included Parma, Modena, and Mantua. The Pope was mildly acquiescent, while England stood out of the conflict.

With regard to material forces, a considerable change had come over the conditions of warfare. Armies of 50,000 were now commonly put in the field, and with the increase in the

¹ "Après avoir longtemps lutté contre la guerre à laquelle l'ambition d'Espagne nous voulait obliger depuis quelques années, enfin cette année (1635) il nous est impossible de reculer d'avantage, et sommes contraints d'entrer en guerre ouverte avec eux" ("Mémoires," op. cit. VIII. 577).

² France was to receive Namur, Hainault, Artois, Luxemburg and the bulk of Flanders; Holland the "Marquisate," viz. Antwerp, Malines, and Brabant, with the remainder of Flanders.

penetrating power of firearms, and the substitution of the musket for the arquebus, had come the gradual abandonment of a large part of the defensive armour of the soldier and the adoption of wider formations and quicker movements. For France to intervene with effect it was therefore necessary for her to put large numbers into the field, and this Richelieu certainly did. There had been a great change in the peace footing since Henry IV had been content with a mere 10,000 men. The increase had not begun with Richelieu; he had 60,000 men at his disposal even in the early days of his ministry: but he steadily increased the peace footing till in 1635 it reached 135,000 foot and 20,880 horse. It was a volunteer army, though pressure was used to secure recruits (e.g. when merchants were forbidden to have more than one apprentice each). Private regiments were encouraged and towns were invited to provide soldiers. But France was unfamiliar with all save civil war, and that is a bad training for soldiers. Richelieu was obliged to stiffen his armies with large drafts of foreign mercenaries—Italian, Scottish, Irish, and Liégeois.

And, if the quality of the troops was deficient, so also was that of the commissariat and organization. There were no barracks, uniforms, or hospitals, and this largely discounted the favourable impression made by the size of the French armies. As to military methods, those of the French were greatly inferior to those of Gustavus. Influenced by their allies the Dutch, they dragged out their campaigns in elaborate sieges and blockades. Richelieu himself, although he laid the foundations of the general strategy on which France has built ever since,—viz. war with four armies all of which should strike at once but in different directions—had no real military genius, and was so suspicious of his subordinates that the French Army was, under his rule, a bad school for the development of such genius in others. As often as not two generals divided the command, leading the army on alternate days: and even such divided commands were continually hampered by interference from outside, and the arrival of an *intendant* from Paris, ostensibly to organize commissariat but as often as not

a spy of the Cardinal, was the inevitable signal for further divisions. Guébriant and Rohan alone of the early commanders displayed capacity, and Rohan was distrusted because he was a Protestant, while Guébriant was seldom given independent command and his talents were wasted in retrieving the blunders of others. Amongst the younger men, however, were growing up the leaders who in the succeeding reign were to make the French armies famous in Europe—the greatest of whom was Turenne.

In the matter of the navy, Richelieu was far more successful. Here he was a real creator, for he found hardly a single ship when he took office and left France a power which had to be reckoned with at sea. Richelieu in fact in the seventeenth century had the long-sightedness to see what was hidden from the shorter vision of Louis XIV and Louis XV in the eighteenth: the importance to France of sea-power. He repeatedly recurs in his *Memoirs* and other writings to the need for a navy. "Forty galleys at Marseilles," he repeats again and again. He desired it as a set-off to the English navy and to cut off the Spanish galleons which brought to Spain the gold of America, for the support and protection of the many companies which he founded, and above all to threaten the sea communications of Spain. By 1640 his energy had provided as many as sixty-five ships and twenty-two galleys. But it is easier to build ships than to provide them with the necessary harbours, armament, arsenals, and repairing stations. Richelieu improved Brest, le Havre, Brouage, and la Tremblade, and by purchases from foreign powers actually made the naval ordnance of France superior to that of Spain. But this magnificent effort to repair long neglect was necessarily temporary and haphazard and affords a proof of the difficulty of extemporizing a navy.

The inadequacy of the French army was demonstrated at the very outset. Châtillon scored a minor success over Thomas of Savoy at Avein in Liège, but was soon after paralysed and compelled to withdraw; and in every direction the French armies were reduced to inertia. The year 1636 saw no improvement. Rohan, who was an accomplished soldier, might

have given a good account of himself, but he was starved of troops and supplies, and in 1637 the Grison League rose against him, with the result that the Valtelline had to be abandoned. In Italy there was a see-saw of success and failure which led to no definite result; in the Pyrenees the Spaniards had the upper hand; in Franche Comté, the young Prince of Condé was checked before Dôle. Burgundy was invaded by imperial troops, who were stopped on the Saône by the resistance of Saint-Jean de Losne and eventually driven back by Bernard of Saxe-Weimar and Cardinal la Valette. But the gravest menace to France was in the north-east, where a Spanish army crossed the frontier and took Corbie (15 August). The alarm in Paris was great; but it was soon allayed by the sang-froid of Richelieu and the steadfast courage of the King. The imperialists lingered on the Somme, and when Louis XIII advanced he recovered Corbie and drove the Spaniards back over the frontier.¹ The Swedes meanwhile under Baner had won the Battle of Wittstock over the Saxons and Austrians (October, 1636), but the general result of their campaign had been unfavourable. The ill-success of the French armies had let loose all the disloyalty and discontent in the kingdom. The Cardinal was threatened by a conspiracy of Gaston and Soissons and much hampered by the opposition of Mlle. de Hautefort, the King's "platonic mistress". The war taxation, moreover, roused the middle and lower classes; Rouen and Guyenne were in a state bordering on insurrection.

All 1637 the campaigns hung fire. Schomberg successfully repulsed a Spanish invasion of Languedoc; Archbishop de Sourdis captured the St. Margaret Islands, and that was all. But in 1638 the tide began to turn. Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, who had bound himself to France by the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye² (26 October, 1635), on the understanding that at the close of hostilities he should receive Alsace, made a successful campaign on the Rhine, totally defeated the

¹ Don Fernando (the Cardinal Infant)'s army was chiefly cavalry and unfitted for its work.

² Bernard was to receive 4,000,000 a year, in return for which he was to keep on foot an army of 18,000, of whom 6000 were to be cavalry.

imperial army at Rheinfelden, and captured the important town of Breisach, which not only was the key of Alsace, but also blocked the connexion between Italy and the Netherlands and was thus a compensation for the loss of the Valtelline. Turenne, the son of the famous Bouillon, afterwards the first commander of his day, won his early successes over Charles of Lorraine, while the French navy asserted its superiority over the Spanish, especially in artillery. Archbishop de Sourdis gained the naval action of Guetana in the Bay of Biscay, and Richelieu's own nephew defeated a Spanish fleet off Genoa (both actions in August, 1638).

In the same year the alliances with Sweden and Savoy were confirmed in the treaties of Hamburg (15 March) and Rivoli respectively (3 July), while at home on 5 September, the crowning mercy of the birth of a dauphin gave a security to Richelieu which he had never before enjoyed, and put an end to the intrigues of Gaston of Orleans and his circle.

In the midst of all these smiles of fortune death removed the Cardinal's wisest counsellor, Father Joseph, who died on 19 December. His place was at once filled by the man who was to be Richelieu's successor, Mazarin. In 1639 the tide, having turned in 1638, began to make strongly in favour of France and her allies. The Dutch, under Van Tromp, annihilated a Spanish fleet in the Channel (21 October). The premature death of Bernard of Saxe-Weimar¹ on 18 July, and the wholesale transference of his magnificent army of mercenaries into the French service gave France a ready-made weapon of infinite value for the prosecution of the war. Bernard's death also placed Alsace and Breisach in French hands.

The year 1640 was no less favourable to the French. It was marked by a somewhat disreputable diplomatic, and a glorious military, success in Italy. The Regent of Savoy, Louis XIII's sister Christina,² had been forced into alliance

¹ He was only thirty-six.

² Her husband, Victor Amadeus I, had died in 1637 and her eldest son, Francis Hyacinth, in 1638. She was now Regent for her second son, Charles Emmanuel II.

with France, in consequence of which Spain fomented and supported the rebellion of her brothers-in-law in Piedmont. France would only grant assistance on the condition that the independence of Savoy should be abandoned. Christina's refusal to accept this condition led to the loss of Piedmont. In 1640 the Regent prevailed on her brother to intervene.¹ Harcourt raised the siege of Casale, took Turin by a brilliant feat of arms (22 September), and expelled the Spaniards from Piedmont. In August of the same year the capture of Arras laid the Netherlands open to the French. No great advantage was taken of these successes. The only military event of the year 1641 was Baner's attempt on Ratisbon and the defeat of the Austro-Bavarians at Wolfenbüttel in June; this was followed up by Guébriant's defeat of Lamboy at Kempen in January, 1642. The Count of Soissons, who had taken refuge at Sedan, led a force of Imperial troops into France in July and won a trifling success at La Marfée, in which he lost his own life. In 1642 Mello, the new Governor-General of the Netherlands, defeated Guiche, the Cardinal's nephew by marriage, at Honnecourt (26 May), but Guébriant successfully retrieved the disaster. France was profiting more from the internal troubles of her enemies than from her own military prowess. In England Richelieu entered into relations with the parliamentary opposition and was suspected of encouraging the Scottish rebellion; Spain was rent asunder by the rebellions of Portugal and Catalonia, and France entered into relations with both sets of rebels (December, 1640, and February, 1641). Louis was elected Count of Barcelona in January, 1641, but the French failed to take Tarragona, de Sourdis' fleet being driven away by the Spaniards (August, 1641). In 1642, however, the French overran and conquered Roussillon.

The year 1642, the close of which Richelieu was not destined to see, was favourable to France. The Savoyard rebellion was brought to an end; Spain seemed to be crumbling to pieces through internal decay. The Swedish General,

¹ This quarrel about Savoy was put right by Mazarin, and it was for this service that Louis XIII got him the Cardinal's hat, 16 December, 1641.

Torstenson, overran Silesia and Moravia, threatened Vienna, and won on 2 November a battle near Leipzig. Thus when the Cardinal was dying he was able to look round and see the power of France in the ascendant in every direction. He died on 4 December, 1642. Seven months later his master followed him to the grave. The war did not end with Richelieu's death, but already all the substantial advantages had been gained. Artois had been recovered; Lorraine, Alsace, and Roussillon were in French hands, while the loss of the command of the sea had completed the severance of the Spanish dominions, which the presence of France in Alsace had begun. Savoy had been brought to a great extent into dependence on France, and French influence was felt in Piedmont. Similarly French influence had been extended into Catalonia and there was at least some prospect of the extension of the frontier to the Ebro. The Protestants of Western Germany had learnt to look for protection to Paris, no longer to Vienna, and thus a great step forward had been taken in the policy of a French clientele in Germany.

Clearly therefore the Cardinal on his death-bed could look with pardonable pride on the transformation he had wrought in the territorial position of France and in the prestige of the Crown in Europe. His triple object had been fulfilled. He had lowered the pride of the nobles; he had brought the Huguenots to the dust; and he had raised his master's name in Europe to its proper level. This is undeniable, and it constitutes Richelieu's claim to be regarded as a great statesman. If we turn to the other side of the account, and ask whether the means he used were justified by the end he had in view, we shall have to qualify our judgment. In crushing the nobles did he not ruin beyond hope of recovery all chance of constitutional reform and condemn his country to absolutism so unfettered that it could have but one end? And in order to secure his military triumphs and their territorial equivalents did he not drain to an unjustifiable extent the resources of his country? The immense armies, whose numbers were a constant source of astonishment to Europe, were vastly expensive. He had far more than quadrupled the expenditure of Henry

IV. In 1639 that expenditure amounted to about 172,000,000 *livres*.¹ How did he meet this enormous drain? The savings of Sully and Henry IV had been dissipated. The money for the war had to be raised. And it must be admitted that in financial matters the Cardinal was both unscrupulous and inexperienced. He acknowledged the latter fact himself. He was not indeed without dreams of a reform of taxation, and he propounded to the Notables in 1626-27 a scheme for buying up the domain and in his *testament politique* there is a further scheme for the reduction of the *taille*, the reimposition of the *sou* per lb. tax, and an increase in the *gabelle*, together with the abolition of the exemptions from that tax. But these were mere pious opinions. Richelieu's reputation must stand by what he did and not by what he said, and in the matter of financial reform he did literally nothing.

The unfortunate country therefore had to meet the unparalleled expenses of the war with the old resources. New taxes, it is true, were imposed on cards and tobacco; but the unpopular *taille* remained the chief source of revenue. This tax in 1610 had brought in no more than 17,000,000 *livres* and had been reformed by Sully²; under Richelieu direct taxation was as high as it is to-day (70,000,000 *livres* in 1639, say 420,000,000 francs to-day). The bourgeois who paid their *taille* regularly were liable to pay that of defaulters also. The *pays d'élection* paid two-thirds of the *taille*, the *pays d'état* one-third; in the former it was a variable tax on revenue, in the second a fixed tax on certain descriptions of land.³ In 1642 it had reached the huge figure of 44,000,000 *livres* (with 25,000,000 of *suppléments*).⁴ The abolition of the abominable *contrainte solidaire*, by which a whole district was collectively responsible for the whole of its *taille*, had been one of the most beneficent of Henry IV's reforms; under Richelieu it was restored.

¹ But it must be remembered that the value of the *livre* had declined by about one-quarter since the opening of the century.

² *Supra*, pp. 116. 117.

³ For the distinction between *pays d'état* and *pays d'élection* see *supra*, p. 116, note.

⁴ Equivalent to 264,000,000 francs to-day.

When we remember how inequitably this tax fell on certain districts and certain classes, how great was the wastage before it reached the royal treasury, and reflect that it was more than doubled under Richelieu, we may well modify our praises of his statesmanship. With regard to the other taxes the old system of farming continued. At the close of the period the *aides* brought in 12,000,000 and the *gabelle* 16,000,000 *livres*. Apart from the way in which they were collected there was no injustice in the indirect taxes which, with the exception of the prohibitive salt-tax,¹ were not on the whole burdensome or ill-distributed. There were practically no exemptions, and in comparison with the *taille* the indirect taxes were popular. Time after time it was urged that they should be increased so that the *taille* might be diminished.

And if the taxes were heavy and unjust Richelieu did not scruple to resort to financial expedients which were even more discreditable: the creation of sinecures for sale, the debasement of the coinage, the reduction of the interest on the State loans, the attempt to keep down the ever-increasing price of gold: these were expedients unworthy of a statesman. Moreover they were insufficient to meet the demands on the exchequer. Instead of the annual surplus which Sully had been able to record we find an annual deficit which amounted in 1639 to 56,000,000 (about one-third of the budget). Thus in spite of the increase of taxation there was a continual deficit and in spite of the deficit there was widespread misery and discontent. This is proved from the observations of contemporaries. France is painted more in the colour of a conquered than a conquering country. Richelieu himself acknowledged the fact,² but he could offer no solution of the problem. He notes the misconduct of his own officials, he laments it, but he

¹ Under Louis XIII a man was obliged to do with less than one-third of the salt that he consumes to-day.

² For instance, in his "Testament Politique". "It is absolutely necessary to remedy the *dérèglements* of the financiers: otherwise they will ruin the kingdom, the face of which is being so changed by their peculations that very soon it will not be recognizable," cf. *ibid.* 208; and again, "There must be a certain proportion between the burden and the strength of those who bear it" (in "Nouvelle bibliothèque populaire," ed. Gautier, p. 206).

does nothing to stop it. But the best proof of all is to be found in the repeated risings of the lower classes, not against the nobles, not directly against the Government, but against the tax-gatherer. Such was the revolt of the *nu-pieds* and that of the *croquants*; such were the troubles at Rouen and in many other towns. The cry was for the abolition of all taxes which had been imposed since the death of Henry IV. This would have meant the cessation of the war and the collapse of Richelieu's magnificent dreams, an eventuality which to him was out of the question. Perish the people, he said, but France must be great.

Not that the Cardinal's boundless activity did not penetrate into the region of commerce, industry, and colonization; he took a vigorous if somewhat impatient interest in all these matters. Strong protectionist though he was, the paltry details of internal trade did not appeal to him, and the exigencies of the war prevented his imposing the retaliatory duties on England and Holland which were essential to its development. The same exigencies also forbade the carrying out in its entirety of the strong Navigation Act which was imposed and which, under certain reservations, excluded foreign merchantmen from French ports. Richelieu greatly desired to protect and develop the maritime commerce of France, and the restoration of the navy was of course a great step in this direction, but there again the war upset all his plans. Spain was the best customer of France, and the complete cessation of trade with Spain consequent on the war was a very serious blow to French commerce. An attempt to exploit Russia from a commercial point of view was unsuccessful, and Mediterranean and Levantine trade was much hampered by the predatory operations of the Corsairs. Closely connected with his dreams of world-wide commerce was the idea of widespread colonization, and the development by privileged companies of remote and wealthy quarters of the globe. France had had her share in the discovery of the new world. The French navigator, Jacques Cartier, had explored a great part of the Gulf of Saint-Lawrence as early as 1534, but although France had her navigators she had never, to any great

extent, developed the spirit of colonization, and the many privileged companies formed and fostered by Richelieu were weak and artificial, and gradually came to be carried on for missionary rather than commercial ends. Most important of these companies was that known as the *Cent Associés*, which in 1628 received a grant of Quebec and the whole of New France or Canada. But Richelieu had neither the money nor, as a matter of fact, the insight properly to support the company which he had created, and in 1629 the English took Quebec from the French Governor, Champlain.¹ The company rapidly fell into the hands of the Jesuits and became, to a large extent, a missionary enterprise. This was the period of the terrible irruptions of the Iroquois Indians, who established a kind of reign of terror in North America. Under such conditions commercial development was of course impossible. More successful was the colonization of the Antilles by the *Compagnie des Îles d'Amérique*. Colonization was also attempted in Africa, where an effort was made to develop Senegal and Gambia. Two companies had been founded in the East Indies, in 1611 and 1615, but with little result. In 1642 a Rochellais protestant, Jacques Pronis, seized Madagascar for the French; but the colony which he founded quickly dwindled away until it comprised only twenty-nine persons.

On the whole the story of French colonization (under Henry IV as well as under Louis XIII) is a story of failure; neither the capital nor the personnel was forthcoming in anything like the quantity which would have been necessary to lay strong and deep the foundations of a French colonial empire. It is not necessary to lay the blame for this at the door of Richelieu. Circumstances were against him, and the true reason for the failure of France was, not the ignorance or indifference of kings or ministers, but the inadaptability for pioneer work, the temperamental domesticity and the homing instinct of Frenchmen of the period, and indeed of all Frenchmen of all periods. In finance, commerce, and colonization therefore, Richelieu failed by doing, rather than by attempting, too little. His policy towards the nobles failed because it was purely de-

¹ Quebec was restored to the French in 1632

structive. Those who say that he had no scheme for their humiliation say so in the face of the Cardinal's own assertion. That the reduction of their pride was one of the three main objects of his policy is undeniable. He found them an obstacle to government and as such he fought them. His objection to them was not one of principle but one of practice. The *noblesse* had at the beginning of the seventeenth century come to a turning of the ways. Not only had it for years been a constant source of trouble and a steadily disintegrating force, but under the more modern conditions which had come into existence there was really no room for it in an unreformed state in the body politic. This must have been clear to any statesman; a more profound statesman than Richelieu would have seen that the mere degradation of the order was dangerous and wasteful, and it is surprising that a man so aristocratic in temperament should not have attempted to transform rather than to crush the *noblesse*. The fact remains that he did not. It is impossible to blame him for his edicts ordering the destruction of feudal fortresses and forbidding duels;¹ but the edicts against duelling were as unsuccessful as the imaginary efforts to prevent brawling between the King's guards and the Cardinal's guards, which Dumas has so humorously described. It is unnecessary to waste lamentations over the fates of Chalais, Montmorency, or Cinq-Mars,² or the many other noble victims of the Cardinal's rigour. For the more part they richly earned their fate. It is possible, however, to regret the deliberate degradation of the order; the opening of its ranks to all who would pay; the way in which titles and honourable distinctions were suffered to lose significance by the careless fashion in which the unauthorized were allowed to assume them; and the way in which privileges, which ought at least to have been reserved to those who had earned them, were sold to the highest bidder.

Those who were responsible for this policy, of whom Richelieu was the chief, were responsible for the sorry part

¹ He was the more inclined to the latter as he had lost his favourite brother in a duel.

² *Infra*, p. 173.

which the *noblesse* of France played in the ensuing century. "The whole order could have agreed to throw up all public service and the country would have experienced no inconvenience." An order of which this could be said, and which yet retained its privileges and distinctions, was doomed sooner or later to inspire contempt as well as jealousy. In the matter of the *noblesse* Richelieu was one of the architects of the Revolution. But we must remember, in palliation, how sorely he was tried by the revolts and conspiracies which had marked almost every year of his ministry. And conspiracy dogged him to the end. He himself had introduced at Court the Count of Cinq-Mars, the youthful son of the Marquis d'Effiat. The King took a violent fancy to the handsome young courtier and promoted him to the rank of *Grand Écuyer*. He soon began to dream of something more than court favour. Richelieu, however, declined to treat him seriously and so offended his *amour propre*, with the result that the favourite began to conspire with the Cardinal's enemies for his overthrow. The King himself was mean and disloyal enough to listen half-heartedly to schemes for the assassination of his minister. The only possible excuse for him is the fact that he was in declining health. Emboldened by Louis' attitude, the conspirators took the suicidal step of applying for Spanish help, and a treaty was signed with Spain stipulating for peace between the two crowns and the provision of 12,000 men from the Low Countries. De Thou, the son of the famous historian, who was Cinq-Mars' most intimate friend, tried in vain to prevent the signature of this treaty. It would have been well for the conspirators if they had followed his advice. For the Cardinal, who was lying on a sick-bed at Tarascon, was quickly informed of the treaty by his spies, and at once forwarded a copy of it to Louis. The King, who was already beginning to tire of Cinq-Mars, at once arrested him together with de Thou, Orleans, and Bouillon, who had all had a share in the plot. He then proceeded to Tarascon, where he had an interview with his minister. Both were ill and indeed nearing their end, and they lay on two beds in the same room while they affected a reconciliation. The prisoners

were tried at Lyons. Richelieu was sufficiently recovered to proceed there by water, and he was careful to tow de Thou behind his barge. Gaston, with characteristic meanness, turned King's evidence. Cinq-Mars and de Thou were executed on 12 September, 1642; the former, at any rate, deserved his fate. When, therefore, we reproach Richelieu with degrading rather than reforming the *noblesse* we must remember that he had suffered at their hands enough to sour a more patient temper than his.

In the matter of administration Richelieu has a cleaner record. He has often been painted as an innovator who, more than any other, laid the foundations of the administrative absolutism which we connect with the name of Louis XIV. This is a false picture. Richelieu was no innovator. He worked with the old material, using it for his own ends. He required absolutism; and he found that he could get it without any need for innovation. Even the *intendants*, of whom he is often supposed to have been the originator, existed before his time, and he only developed and increased their powers. He had, in fact, no grand scheme of absolutism; if he had an ideal of government it was rather of a paternal monarchy on the lines of that of Henry IV. But, though he saw the virtue in this ideal, he had neither the leisure nor the temperament to realize it. It does not appear that he worked with uniformity in his eye. Rather he accepted things as they were, abandoned the paternal ideal, and used the existing free institutions as the medium of his tyranny. "His acts," it has been said, "were more absolute than his doctrines." True, he called no States General, but then neither had Henry IV; he had had first-hand experience of the Estates in his early days—of their disunity and want of patriotism; and it was clear to him that a king working for the unification and expansion of his kingdom, had a more elevated view of the functions of sovereignty than an assembly divided into orders, each of which was fighting for its own hand, and a prey to local jealousies which further prevented the possibility of united or patriotic action. He only once called an assembly of notables; here too he was on a level with Henry IV.

With the *Parlement*, until the Day of Dupes, he temporized. After that, when he found that the *Parlement* was not a willing instrument in the degradation of the nobles, he deprived it of much of its jurisdiction by appointing special commissions to try his political prisoners.¹ But though he objected to the use of the right of remonstrance, he did not deny its existence, and even (in the Edict of 21 February, 1641) specifically authorized it, while denying the right of the *Parlement* to refuse to register the royal edicts.

With regard to the provincial liberties, there was undoubtedly a dead set against these; but this was during the ascendancy of the Queen Mother, when a deliberate attempt was made to draw the *pays d'état* down to the level of the *pays d'élection*. If uniformity was aimed at it would have been more statesmanlike as well as more popular to try and raise the *pays d'élection* up to the level of the *pays d'état*.² The *pays d'état*, of course, resisted the proposals, and there was a considerable revolt at Dijon in 1630, which the King quelled in person. After the accession of the Cardinal to full power there was a noticeable modification in the treatment of the provincial *états*. Richelieu did not regard them as an obstacle to his absolutism, and he was therefore willing that they should continue. In Brittany he accepted the principle of consent to taxation and did not interfere with the local *états*. The *pays d'état* resisted the attempt to establish *généralités* and in some cases (e.g. in Languedoc) bought themselves out.

Richelieu must, therefore, be exonerated from the accusation of having schemed for the overthrow of popular liberties and their replacement by a uniform system of absolutism.

¹ Cp. Louis XIII's words to the *Parlement* (1631-2): "Cet État est monarchique. Toutes choses dépendent de la volonté du prince qui établit les juges comme il lui plait. . . . Vous n'êtes établis que pour juger entre maître Pierre et maître Jean . . . et si vous continuez vos entreprises je vous rognerai les ongles et de si près qu'il vous en cuira." Mathieu Molé, "Mémoires" (ed. Champollion-Figeac for Société de l'histoire de France, 1855), II. p. 141 sqq.

² There was a steady demand from the *pays d'élection* that they should receive treatment similar to that given to the *pays d'état*; in the latter the day-labourer and artisan (i.e. the poor) escaped the *taille*.

The crown indeed was absolute in practice though not in theory, and the administration remained decentralized. When the Cardinal experienced difficulty in administration he resorted to the expedient of sending the *maîtres des requêtes* on circuits to put matters straight. This idea of sending out executive agents from head-quarters was no new one. They were known as *commissaires départis*, *surintendants*, and finally as *intendants*, and it was the latter name that stuck. They were sent not only to the provinces to protect the interests of the Crown, but also to the armies, where they were a great hindrance to the generals, acting as they did as spies of the Cardinal. Concurrent jurisdiction is seldom efficient and always unpopular. The *intendants* were a constant thorn in the flesh to the *Parlements*, which continually protested against their employment. The point to notice is that Richelieu did not introduce them, and that they were not yet resident, as they became in the reign of Louis XIV, but peripatetic, and at once reminiscent of the *missi domini* of Charlemagne and prophetic of the *représentants en mission* of the Convention.

To conclude, Richelieu did not revolutionize the administration. So far from being an innovator he erred, especially in matters financial, rather on the side of conservatism. He left the institutions of government and the machinery of administration very much as he found them. He was the apostle of absolutism only so far as he was able to employ existing institutions for that end. He is, therefore, responsible for the introduction of the spirit and practice of absolutism, rather than for the setting up of any machinery which stereotyped it. His success, however, was so great and he cast such a spell over posterity, that he injured the cause of liberty and constitutionalism as much as if he had established a cast-iron machinery of absolutism. His successors, unable to get the same response from the machinery which he used, and at the same time bound to absolutism by his example, quickly gave it an organization so complete that it required a cataclysm to shake it. To that extent and no further can we call Richelieu the father of the absolute Monarchy.

Richelieu's astonishing activity compels admiration ; amidst

all the cares of the State and the anxieties of European and civil warfare, working through a centralized government which concentrated the burden on his shoulders, he yet found time for endless side interests; he was a real patron of art, *belles lettres*, and learning. He rebuilt the Sorbonne (the College founded in 1253 by Louis IX's Confessor, Robert de Sorbon).¹ He gave letters-patent to the Academy, which had previously existed only as a private society (1635); and both the Sorbonne and the Academy remain very much as he left them.

Yet at best the record is a negative one. And when we picture the grand but unsympathetic figure of the Cardinal stalking through his palaces surrounded by a court which almost rivalled that of the King, proud and haughty beyond all measure, yielding precedence not even to the princes of the blood, Condé himself giving place to him, surrounded by a retinue of spies, agents, and informers, coldly and steadily faithful to his master and suspicious of every one else, it is impossible not to carry the eye back to the tragedy of the Rue de la Ferronnerie and to wish that Henry IV had lived to prosecute the war with Austria and the overthrow of the Huguenots. He was a man who even in his weakness was congenial to the spirit of France. One is puzzled to know where his hot blood and boisterous spirit had hid itself in the constitution of his cold and moody son. He and Sully might, one thinks, have done what Louis XIII and Richelieu did, and done it at far less cost to the nation; less cost of treasure, for they would have made war from their savings; less cost in lives, for Henry was a real leader and not a mere dam-and-dyke builder like the Cardinal, and moreover he could trust his subordinates, which Richelieu could not; less cost, finally, in national character, for Henry was a man who had lived with the people and genuinely loved and worked for the people, whereas the Cardinal, though he recognized the value of popular support, was temperamentally unable to win or even to woo that support, with the result that he gained his ends at the expense of sacrificing at once the goodwill and the happiness of the people. Often, as one wades through the

¹ *Supra*, I. 212.

dreary narrative of his pompous and interminable *Mémoires*, one longs for a peal of Béarnais laughter, a return of that full-blooded sympathy, that boisterous and kindly *bonhomie*, to which we were accustomed under the earlier regime. Richelieu appears at his worst when compared with his predecessors.

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CHAPTER XXIII

MAZARIN AND THE MINORITY OF LOUIS XIV

(1643-1661)

ON his death-bed Richelieu had advised Louis XIII to entrust the government to his protégé, Cardinal Giulio Mazarin, and this advice the King obediently followed. Mazarin was of Sicilian extraction. He had served his apprenticeship in European diplomacy partly in Spain and partly at the Court of Urban VIII, whose agent he had been in the negotiations of Cherasco,¹ and in whose army he had seen active service. Two visits to Paris on papal errands, as well as these Italian affairs, had brought him to the notice of Richelieu; and in 1632 he had served France in negotiating with Piedmont the Treaty of Turin. From 1634 to 1638 he was Papal Nuncio to France and had adopted a strongly anti-Spanish attitude. In 1640 he settled permanently in France, and it was by the influence of Louis XIII that in the following year he was raised to the dignity of Cardinal. During the closing years of the reign he had been constantly employed by Richelieu, with whose policy he became thoroughly intimate.

The substitution of Mazarin for Richelieu did not therefore imply any interruption in the continuity of the policy of France. But the difference in character of the two statesmen implied a difference of method; and the history of France is transferred to a different plane. For Richelieu's haughty austerity Mazarin substituted a soft and purring gentleness. The *grand seigneur* gives place to the amiable adventurer.²

¹ *Supra*, p. 155.

² See Mme. de Motteville, "Memoirs," trans. Wormeley (1902), Vol. I, 81, 87, for Mazarin's suavity and gentleness. *Ibid.* 1. 191: "He had the gift of pleasing and it was impossible to keep oneself from being charmed with his sweetness". Applied to Richelieu this would be ludicrous.

Men flouted Mazarin to his face who would have cringed to Richelieu. Where the latter would have struck with a consciousness of power, the former waited for the slower operations of time. An infinite cunning in dealing with ever-changing circumstances is substituted for the clear head and iron hand which shaped and dominated circumstances themselves.

This change involved a great abasement in the tone of public life ; and together with his vulgar greed and unblushing nepotism, it was the Italian shiftiness of Mazarin that provoked the *Frondes* and prolonged unduly the European war. But it must not be forgotten in contrasting the two Cardinals that Richelieu's weakness as well as his strength had been the very aloofness which was wanting in Mazarin ; the latter profited as well as lost by his more human standard. It may be doubted indeed whether Richelieu could have concluded the European war as it was concluded by Mazarin. Would he have given to Turenne and Condé the free hand which Mazarin gave to them ? The Italian was at any rate the better judge and employer of men. He chose and trusted not only good generals but also good civil servants. Le Tellier, Servien, and Lionne, Colbert himself, the greatest economist, perhaps the greatest statesman, of the *ancien régime* ; all these men were discovered by Mazarin, who, in diplomacy and the *haute politique*, was at least the equal of his predecessor. His brain was perhaps less clear and comprehensive, but it was more subtle and pliant. It was not in wits but in character that Mazarin fell so far short of Richelieu.

It was a disaster for France that one so closely trained in the old school should have taken up the reins of government. That school was possessed by the single idea of raising France to a predominant position in Europe and to this object was willing to sacrifice the internal prosperity of the country. Both Cardinals made this sacrifice, and in doing so were untrue to the traditions of Henry IV, who had originated the idea of a dominant, but had combined it with the idea of a prosperous, France. Under both Richelieu and Mazarin the country suffered from too much diplomacy, and purchased European greatness at too high a price.

On his death-bed Louis XIII had nominated Anne of Austria Regent, and had at the same time appointed Monsieur (Orléans) Lieutenant-General, with an advisory council of seven; the Queen, Orléans, Condé, Mazarin, Séguier, Bouthillier, and Chavigny—the four last all creatures of Richelieu. Anne was a Queen of a type very different from the two earlier Regents. Retaining her beauty beyond the “terrible age” of forty, and relieved from the presence of her cold and moody husband, with whom she had never had much intercourse or happiness, she not only became more amiable but also gave proof of considerable dignity, courage, and force of character. Her sharp little voice, wonderful chestnut hair, and those matchless snowy hands which d’Artagnan had cause to remember, were the talk of Europe. No reader of Madame de Motteville can fail to be drawn to the beautiful, devout, and gracious Queen; but it is necessary to remember that she was in everything—perhaps even in domestic life—the partner of Mazarin, and must share with him the blame for the unrest and misery which marked the period of her Regency.

On the death of Louis XIII there was the usual stir among the Princes of the Blood, who hoped that Anne would dismiss the Cardinal and admit them to a share in the government. Louis’ will was at once annulled and the *Parlement* was summoned on 18 May to a *lit de justice*, at which Mazarin was not present; Anne was declared Regent and the old plotter Monsieur (Gaston of Orléans, the late King’s brother) Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom with Condé as his deputy. Every one expected that the Regent would dismiss the old Councillors. Great, therefore, was the surprise when on the very evening of the *lit de justice* Mazarin was appointed *chef du conseil*. Thus early in his career did he enjoy his day of dupes.

This triumph at home found a quick echo at the front. Firmly established in Alsace, and holding in Breisach the key to Southern Germany, France had been left by Richelieu in a favourable position. Guébriant’s fame was at its height, and he had conceived a masterly plan—afterwards developed by Mazarin—for holding the Rhine from Basle to Mainz and so

closing to the enemy Champagne and the valley of the Oise, and at the same time establishing relations between the armies of the Rhine and those of the Low Countries. To carry out this plan it was necessary to clear the Oise valley and to raise the siege of Rocroi, a town in the Ardennes which was invested by the Spaniards. Condé's son (afterwards "the great Condé" but at that time the Duc d'Enghien) had been entrusted with this task. His Council of War advised him to risk nothing during the early days of the Regency ; but, full of fire and determination, he overrode the Council and on 19 May, the reign being four days old, attacked the Spaniards at Rocroi, and by his combination of personal valour with military prudence, and in particular by his skilful use of cavalry, inflicted on that redoubtable infantry such a defeat as it had not experienced since it had made its name eighty-six years before at Saint-Quentin. Eight thousand Spaniards fell and 6000 were taken prisoner. In Mazarin's own words this brilliant victory, "*la plus éclatante dont on ait entendu parler depuis longtemps,*" was the best possible affirmation of the Regency, "showing as it did that it was confirmed by God as well as by man".¹ Rocroi is a battle full of interest for students of military affairs ; it demonstrated the utter weakness of firearms ; and was won almost wholly by naked steel and cavalry, but cavalry at the trot. Shock tactics with cavalry were only introduced by Turenne. The Spanish cavalry at Rocroi did, however, make one magnificent charge at the gallop. Mazarin instructed Enghien to move southwards and besiege Thionville. Once established on the Moselle he would be in touch with Guébriant, who had been containing the Austrian General Mercy. Thionville surrendered on 10 August, and Enghien pushed on and threatened the Electorate of Trier. The plan of Guébriant and Mazarin was on the point of accomplishment, when Enghien jeopardized it by suddenly returning to Paris, thereby giving the first indication of his incorrigible weakness for intrigue. When he returned to the front in October the season was so far advanced as to make campaigning difficult.

¹ See "*Lettres du cardinal Mazarin pendant son ministère*" (ed. Chêrueil, 1872-94), I, 174, 175, 177.

The city of Strassburg had protested against the presence of Guébriant's army in Alsace,¹ but that army could not recross the Rhine without support from Enghien. When it did so, siege was laid to Rottweil, the key of Würtemberg and Suabia. In this siege Guébriant lost his life, and Rantzau, who took over his command, led the army to defeat at Tuttlingen (24 November). Enghien's insubordination had contributed much to ensure this disastrous ending of a campaign to which his valour had given so auspicious an opening.

While affairs at the front had been following this course Mazarin had been fighting for his position at home. The various malcontents had drawn together in the faction of the *Importants*. Of this faction the leaders were Beaufort, the second son of Caesar of Vendôme (the unworthy son whom Gabrielle d'Estrées had borne to Henry IV), and Madame de Chévreuse, the widow of Louis XIII's favourite Luynes,² who had already disturbed the previous reign by her intrigues. No one, however, desired the abandonment of the national policy which the success of the *Importants* would have involved. When Beaufort hatched a plot for the murder of the Cardinal, the Queen had him arrested and thrown into the Castle of Vincennes (September, 1643). The fact was that Anne of Austria had developed an attachment for the suave and handsome Italian. She was of a highly susceptible nature, as Buckingham had discovered even during her husband's lifetime. In the end of 1643 she moved from the Louvre to the neighbouring Palais Cardinal³ and Mazarin went to live in an adjoining house. A door of communication was contrived between the two. A year later he moved into the palace itself: there is good evidence that he was actually married to the Queen. This was possible, because, although a Cardinal, he seems not to have been actually in priest's orders. Married or not, the Queen at any rate had to bear the stigma of being her minister's paramour. Her affection was of infinite value to

¹ See "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. i. 380.

² She had married Claude of Lorraine, Duke of Chévreuse.

³ Now the Palais Royal, but rebuilt by the Orleanses,

Mazarin. In the present instance it was this support that gave him an easy triumph over the *Importants*.

Freed from their intrigues, the Cardinal turned his attention to the military situation. His judgment was never better displayed than in the choice of Turenne to succeed Rantzau. Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne, was the second son of the brilliant Duc de Bouillon who had played a conspicuous part in the two previous reigns.¹ On his mother's side he was a grandson of William the Silent and thus inherited the sterling qualities of the house of Orange, which combined with the more fiery and brilliant characteristics of his father to produce the most valuable soldier to whom France had yet given birth.² Less impetuous than Condé, his was the deliberate courage of calculation; cool, well balanced, and merciful, he was free from Condé's incurable levity; and although he joined the *Fronde* for a space, his conduct in that demoralizing time was at least upright if not entirely consistent. At this moment he was thirty-two years of age and had had experience of war in Holland, Lorraine, on the Rhine, and more lately in Italy.

Turenne and Condé joined in an attack on Mercy, who was strongly entrenched on the spurs of the mountains of the Black Forest close to Freiburg. A series of bloody frontal attacks dislodged the enemy and forced him to retire (3-5 August, 1644). The victory was costly and not very decisive, but it made it possible to carry out the scheme for holding the line of the Rhine. Philippsburg was taken, Speyer and Worms placed under French protection, and Mainz and Landau garrisoned with French troops.

Meanwhile Sweden, the oldest, and perhaps the most necessary, of the allies of France, had become involved with the other Baltic powers, and the subsidies which France was

¹ *Supra*, p. 123.

² Napoleon I declared Turenne to be the greatest French General, and noted the fact that he increased in audacity as he grew older (Gourgaud, "Journal inédit de Saint Hélène," 1889, II. 21). He once said that if Turenne had appeared on the field of Wagram he would have at once appreciated the new conditions of warfare.

paying for her assistance against the Empire were diverted from their legitimate object. By very skilful diplomacy Mazarin succeeded in restoring peace among the northern powers, and in March, 1645, Torstenson, who had invaded Bohemia and defeated an imperial army at Jankowitz in March, was once more threatening Vienna. In the same month Turenne crossed the Rhine, but was surprised and defeated at Marienthal by Mercy in May. Marienthal was an instance of "the biter bit". Turenne had set out to surprise Mercy in his winter quarters. He had dispersed his tired troops into cantonments and Mercy determined to attack them. Turenne made the mistake of rallying forward, and was caught. Condé was sent to the front, and helped Turenne to turn the tables on the Austrians at Nordlingen (3 August, 1645), in which battle Mercy himself was killed. But the necessity for hostilities in Flanders saved Bavaria. Monsieur was extremely jealous of Condé's success and claimed a command. But he was of doubtful courage ("reckoned unfortunate in war," to use Mme. de Motteville's delightful euphemism), and Condé had to be called in whenever anything serious was meditated. His requirements in the Low Countries denuded the armies of the Rhine. It was a war of sieges; Gravelines had been taken in 1644. Mardick and Cassel had been taken and retaken in the following year; and in 1646 Monsieur with Condé's assistance had taken Courtrai and retaken Mardick. In October 1646, Condé took Furnes and Dunkirk. The capture of the latter was an event of great importance.¹

Mazarin had in fact rightly judged that in Flanders, economically and strategically so important, France would find the best recompense for her labours in the Thirty Years War. The acquisition of the Spanish Netherlands would provide "an inexpugnable boulevard for the city of Paris" and would make that city really the heart of France.² The idea was admirable but it was an over-reach. Mazarin reckoned without the Dutch. The capture of Dunkirk, which threatened their commerce, had greatly disturbed them, and, to Mazarin's disgust, they

¹ It moved Corneille to enthusiasm; see his introduction to *Rodogune*.

² "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. II. 710.

began to negotiate with Spain. In vain did he propose the exchange of Catalonia for the Spanish Netherlands; Catalonia was slipping from his grasp. Condé himself failed to capture Lerida (June, 1647).¹ The reconciliation of Holland with Spain was completed in 1647 and was a grave set-back to the policy of Mazarin.

But, however unsuccessful in the direction of Spain, France was working her way to a triumph over the other branch of the House of Habsburg. We left Turenne somewhat embarrassed after the barren victory of Nordlingen (his latest biographer calls it "rather an avoidance of defeat than a victory"). Once more he was obliged to recross the Rhine. But in April, 1646, he commenced the most remarkable of all his campaigns. Starting from Trier he marched down the Rhine with the object of effecting a junction with the Swedes (under Wrangel who had succeeded Torstenson). Wrangel was at Friedberg in Darmstadt, but Turenne had to march 150 miles down the river to Wesel before he could effect a crossing. He then marched up the river on the opposite bank, and had accomplished no less than 320 miles in little more than a month when he joined Wrangel at Friedberg: "a march that has rarely if ever been surpassed in the annals of war".²

The campaign which followed was novel in character. Scarcely any pitched battles were fought, but by a series of strategical marches the allies completely out-manceuvred the Imperialists and finally brought themselves into position outside Munich. To save his capital Maximilian made the Treaty of Ulm (March, 1647) in which he agreed to withdraw his

¹ " Ils reviennent nos guerriers
Fort peu chargés de lauriers :
La couronne en est trop chère,
Lère la lère lanlère,
Lère la
À Lerida."

Contemporary lampoon, see Mademoiselle de Montpensier, "Mémoires" (ed. Chérueil, 1891), I. 151.

² General Sir F. Lloyd in introduction to "Life of Turenne" by the author of a "Life of Sir Kenelm Digby" (1907).

support from the Emperor; Bohemia and Vienna itself were laid open by this defection, and Turenne proposed to advance at once and threaten the Emperor in his capital. But the peace negotiations, which had been in progress at Münster and Osnabruck since 1644, had by this time reached such a stage that Mazarin thought it unwise to press the Emperor too hard.¹ It was the approach of the Peace of Westphalia alone that robbed Turenne of the military fruits of his brilliant generalship.

Successful in central Europe, the policy and arms of France had been less so in Spain and Italy. It was in fact impossible with a depleted Treasury to maintain in a state of proper efficiency armies in so many quarters. In his native country Mazarin's policy was conspicuously unsuccessful. The election of Innocent X, the special protégé of Spain, was a great setback. The Cardinal hid his mortification by expressing in a letter of congratulation the hope that the Pope would contribute to the pacification of Europe.² But he sent two naval expeditions to the coasts of Italy and intimidated the Pope into giving his brother Michael the cardinal's hat. In 1647 Naples revolted against its Spanish monarchs and Mazarin attempted to force Prince Thomas of Savoy on the Neapolitans. They, however, placed the flippant and adventurous Duke of Guise at the head of a Neapolitan republic. Tiring of him, they restored the Spanish dynasty, to the mortification of France.

Maximilian did not long adhere to the terms of the Treaty of Ulm; he was in arms again in 1648. Turenne's Weimarian troops had mutinied for arrears of pay, and only his tact and personality had restored loyalty in time for him to win the Battle of Zusmarshausen (17 May, 1648), after which the allies were once more masters of Bavaria. A series of successes in the Low Countries, following on Turenne's victory and culminating in Condé's fine victory over the Archduke Leopold at Lens (20 August),³ at length convinced the Emperor of the

¹ See "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. II. 421.

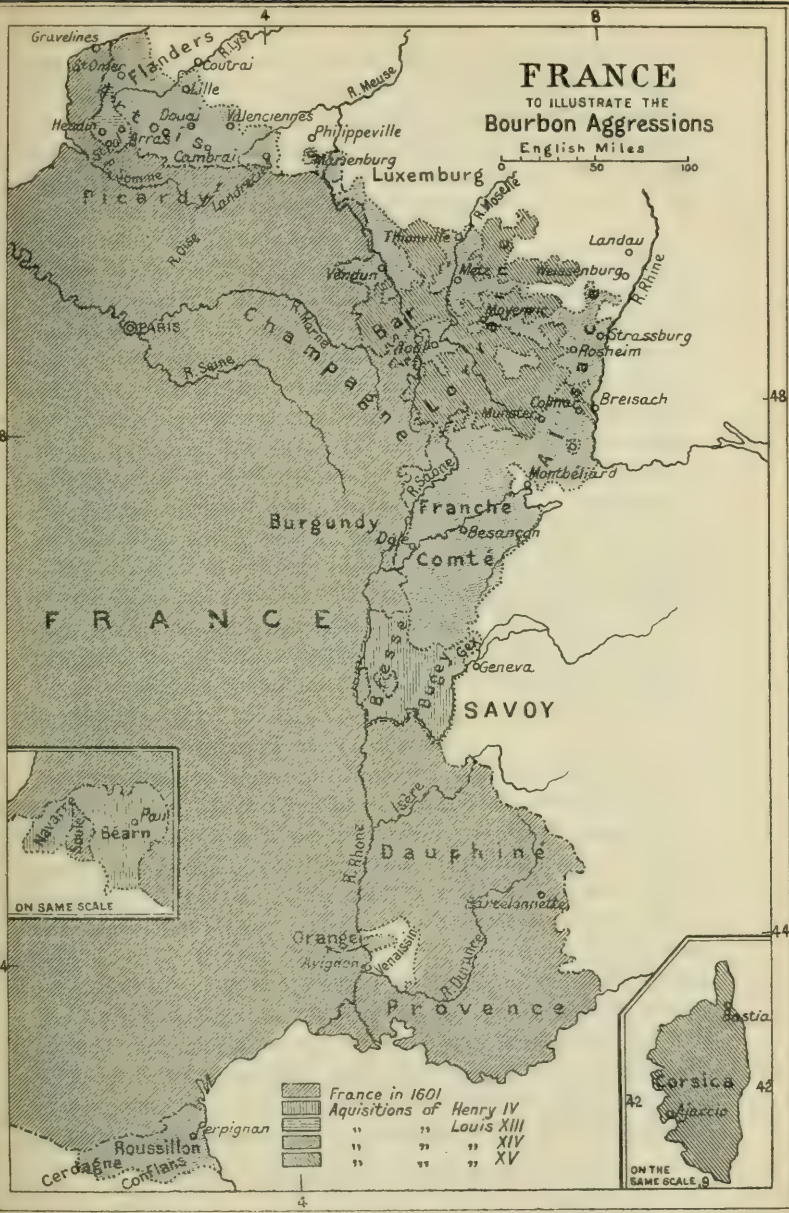
² *Ibid.* op. cit. II. 88.

³ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, "Mémoires," I. 176, for Mazarin's delight at the Battle of Lens and the *Te Deum* that was sung.

necessity of peace. Harassed as he was by domestic difficulties, of which we shall have to take notice later, Mazarin urged the French plenipotentiary, Servien, to press the negotiations to an issue, and on 24 October the Thirty Years War was brought to a conclusion by the signature of the Treaties of Westphalia. After ninety years the cession of the Three Bishoprics which had been guaranteed by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis¹ was recognized by the Emperor. Far more important, however, was the cession of Alsace, by which the frontiers were carried at one stroke to the Rhine, while the surrender of Breisach and the occupation of Philippsburg added two important outposts on the right bank of that river. The terms of the cession of Alsace were, it is true, marred by ambiguities of expression due to the fact that Alsace was a geographical not a political entity, but on the whole the balance was in favour of the full sovereignty of France. But for the troubles in which he was involved at home the Cardinal would no doubt have held out for a less equivocal cession of territory. His judgment, however, was correct. Louis XIV had little trouble in vindicating his right to Alsace. The Treaty of Westphalia brought other important changes. Pignerolo was ceded to France. Sweden received Pomerania west of the Oder (and a small district on the other bank), the islands of Usedom and Wollin (in Mecklenburg), Bremen and Verden. But all these ceded districts remained part of the Empire. Brandenburg was compensated by the accession of Eastern Pomerania, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt. Bavaria kept her electoral dignity with the Upper Palatinate. The Lower Palatinate was restored to the unfortunate Frederick's son, Charles Louis, who remained an elector.

More important to France was the extension of the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555. This assured the toleration of both creeds of Protestantism and the special legalization of Calvinism within the Empire. More important even than this, and the key-note of the subsequent policy of France in Germany, was the acknowledgment by the Emperor of the rights of the German States to full liberties. For these liberties

¹ *Supra*, p. 41.

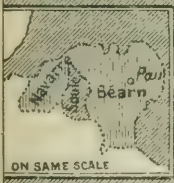


FRANCE

TO ILLUSTRATE THE
Bourbon Aggressions

English Miles
50 100

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| | France in 1601 |
| | Acquisitions of Henry IV |
| | " " Louis XIII |
| | " " " XIV |
| | " " " XV |



France had fought, and the constitutional limitations thus placed upon the arbitrary power of the Emperor were invaluable to her. The Empire in fact triumphed over the Emperor in the Peace of Westphalia and triumphed by the aid of France and Sweden. The mere fact that France had used the Empire against the Emperor in the Thirty Years War is proof of the value to her of this arrangement.

The Treaties of Westphalia were a triumphant conclusion to the diplomatic labours of Richelieu and Mazarin. The Austrian branch of the House of Habsburg was humbled and retired from the struggle, leaving the Spanish branch isolated. But for the unfortunate internal complications it would not have taken ten long years to impose peace upon Spain; as it was, the Peace of the Pyrenees was the natural corollary to that of Westphalia. Not only were the Austrian Habsburgs humbled but France attained the position in Europe of which Richelieu had dreamed. She was arbiter of the situation, and could claim to be the successful protector of the Germanic liberties. Her splendid territorial acquisitions were an acknowledgment of her supremacy. It is difficult to believe that Richelieu himself could have attained a success greater than that of Mazarin. There is even ground for thinking that Mazarin's less Olympian talents were more valuable than those of his predecessor.

The supreme ability of Mazarin's diplomacy having been acknowledged, all that can be said in his favour has been said. We may grant him a talent for intrigue which stood him in good stead in dealing with the factious nobility, and a certain loyalty to Anne of Austria and to what he conceived to be the interests of France. But as an administrator he was worse than useless. During the whole of his career not a step was taken for the internal advantage of the country. Like Richelieu he had no aptitude for finance, and, while the armies were starved and mutinying for want of pay, France was ground down with taxation and there were repeated outbursts of resentment. Mazarin himself acknowledged that they had consumed the revenue for the current and two following years.¹

¹ Mazarin, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. III. 159.

The legal rate of interest was reduced from 15 per cent to 6 per cent. New sources of revenue were eagerly sought. A lapsed edict of Henry IV forbidding the erection of houses within a certain zone outside Paris was revived and a fine of 50 *sous a toise*¹ (6 ft.) on the sites of all houses within the zone imposed; only to be abandoned in face of the outcry of the *Parlement* (1644). A tax on the leisured classes, known as the *taxe des aisés*, proved both inquisitorial and unproductive. In 1647 the tariff on all articles brought into Paris was revised: the *Parlement* again resisted. A scheme for introducing a kind of *paulette* into ecclesiastical benefices was abandoned on account of the opposition of the Pope. An attempt to apply the same principle to the occupants of houses in the royal domain provoked a riot in Paris² (January, 1648). In spite of these and many similar expedients the condition of the finances was deplorable. Nani, the Venetian ambassador, wrote in 1648 that the revenues for the forthcoming year had been anticipated, and later in the same year that the revenues until 1650 had already been almost spent. The condition of the country was as bad as that of the finances. The speech of Omer Talon in the *lit de justice* of January, 1648, reveals a lamentable state of affairs. "It is ten years," he said, "since the country was ruined: the peasants are reduced to sleeping on straw: their furniture is sold for the payment of taxes and to furnish Paris with luxuries, millions of innocent souls are obliged to live on black and oaten bread . . . the hope of peace, the honour of victories, the glory of conquered provinces cannot nourish those who have no bread."³ No wonder the Queen flushed and the Cardinal grew pale as they listened to this scathing indictment. Making all allowance for rhetorical exaggeration, it must be admitted that the speaker had exposed the weakness of the policy which Richelieu had initi-

¹ Mazarin, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. II. 5 and 6. Also Mademoiselle de Montpensier, "Mémoires," op. cit. I. 91.

² An insurrection of the propertied classes: see "Mémoires de Gui Joly," in Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. 3, II. 5.

³ Omer Talon, "Mémoires" (Michaud et Poujoulat, op. cit. 3, VI.), p. 211.

ated and which Mazarin was completing. The condition of the country was one of extreme misery, and there was no sign that the government either wished or was able to provide a remedy.¹ In all Mazarin's vast correspondence, while there are many allusions to the depletion of the Treasury, there is hardly a reference to the condition of the country. On one occasion indeed he resents the suggestion that the *taille* in Guyenne would have to be levied *à main armée*:² but there is no word of remedial measures: no indication of the need for internal reform.

It is impossible not to see that the time for some such reform had arrived. An upheaval in the seventeenth century—the establishment of some kind of Constitution—would have been far less disastrous than the terrible catastrophe of the eighteenth century: there is an element of truth in the saying that the French killed their king two hundred years too late.³ The English at this moment were bringing Charles I to the scaffold. The French looked in vain for any one to voice their misery. The States General, which alone could have emulated the English Parliament, were by this time in complete and well-merited abeyance. The *Parlement* indeed considered itself in a sense the sister of its English namesake: but in point of fact it was a purely juridical body with only one constitutional attribute, that of “humble remonstrance”⁴ together with the right to register Edicts. Even with these poor weapons the *Parlement* was often successful; its faults were faults of character rather than constitution. Occasionally a voice like that of Omer Talon was raised to give expression to the misery of the nation. But as a body the *Parlement* was utterly selfish, and in its resistance to the Crown fought not for the rights of the people but for its own, and

¹ Normand, “La bourgeoisie française au XVII^e Siècle” (1908), Pt. II. ch. v., for the misery of France. Cf. Feillet, “La Misère au temps de la Fronde” (1862).

² Mazarin, “Lettres,” ed. Chéruel, op. cit. i. 668.

³ The late Sir W. Harcourt is said to have elicited this remark from one of his French kinsmen.

⁴ Even that privilege was disputed. The *Parlement* claimed precedence over the States General because it sprang from the *Conseil du Roi*.

against the invasion of its privileges. Its indifference to the needs of the Treasury might have been pardoned if it had been protecting the poor against injustice: but it was thinking only of its own pocket, so that its indifference was simply unpatriotic. The *Parlement* in fact was a mere caricature of the English Parliament, and the *Fronde*, as the war was called in which it fought, was equally a caricature of the English Civil War.

In the early days of 1648 the whole of the *Parlements* were defying the Crown, and that at a moment when funds were more than ever necessary. Matters came to a head when the question of the renewal of the *Paulette* was raised. The magistrates of the other civil courts of Paris—the *Chambre des Comptes*, the *Cour des Aides*, and the *Grand Conseil*—were mulcted of four years' salary in return for the renewal of the privilege. The *Parlement de Paris* at once came to the rescue; an *arrêt d'union* was signed (13 May, 1648), and representatives of each of the sovereign courts met in the *Chambre Saint-Louis*. This was an illegal step and, as Mazarin pointed out,¹ likely to react unfavourably on foreign affairs, then in a very critical position. At first the Court stood firm and decreed the exile of the magistrates from Paris. But from this attitude it quickly receded. If it had been genuinely set on attaining popular liberties and administrative reform the *Chambre Saint-Louis* might have performed a useful work. But its true character was quickly revealed in the charter of twenty-seven propositions which it put forward.² Although this Charter laid down the principle of freedom of the subject, and that of consent to taxation, its first article demonstrated its factious character. It demanded the abolition of the *Intendants*. They were the backbone of the internal government, which would have been dislocated by their abolition. The "reformers," however, regarded them as mere usurpers of lucrative posts which properly appertained to their class. With these de-

¹ See his ninth *Carnet*. See also "Bibliographie des Mazarinades" (ed. Moreau for Société de l'histoire de France), Introduction.

² Printed in Isambert, "Recueil des anciennes lois françaises, 420-1789" (ed. Jourdan, 1822-33), xvii. 72-84.

mands, put forward by Broussel¹ the doyen of the *Grand' Chambre*, a veteran who had served under Henry IV, the court determined to compromise. On 31 July there was a royal *séance*,² in which the Queen "threw roses on the heads" of the Parlementarians in the shape of reductions of taxation, abolition of recently created offices, and unconditional *paulette*. Meanwhile Mazarin reinforced Condé in order that his hand might be strengthened by success at the front,³ and on 20 August was rewarded by the decisive victory of Lens.⁴ "Heaven has declared itself in our favour!" said the Cardinal when the news reached him: and the King, when he heard it, is said to have remarked, "Le parlement sera bien fâché!" and so in fact it was. The court did not waste time: six days after the victory, Broussel and two other leaders of the *Parlement* were arrested. There followed one of those *journées* of which Paris possesses the secret. Broussel was a popular hero: that was enough. Barricades flew up. The old bad habits of the period of the League were not forgotten.⁵ Sedition was fostered by many persons in high places who desired the downfall of the Cardinal rather than the triumph of the *Parlement*. Conspicuous amongst these were the Coadjutor Bishop of Paris, Paul de Gondi (afterwards Cardinal de Retz) and the Duc de Longueville. The royal Chancellor was roughly handled in the streets and narrowly escaped with his life. Mathieu Molé, President of the *Parlement*, proceeded to the palace and demanded the release of the prisoners. When he returned without them he was roughly handled by

¹ "Mémoires de Conrart," in Michaud et Poujoulat, *op. cit.* Series III, iv. p. 574, and Retz, "Mémoires" (1842-3), II. 13 *sqq.*

² Mazarin, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, *op. cit.* III. 159. Omer Talon, "Mémoires," *op. cit.* p. 256 *sqq.*, and de Motteville, "Mémoires," *op. cit.* I. 295 *sqq.*

³ Mazarin was at this time in despair at the situation—without a victory at the front he was impotent at home. In a letter to Servien of 14 August, he confesses "with tears of blood" that the Kingdom is rotten within, *Le dedans est extraordinairement gâté*, "Lettres," *op. cit.* III. 173 *sqq.*

⁴ Mazarin, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, *op. cit.* III. 181 and 188.

⁵ Omer Talon, "Mémoires," *op. cit.* p. 265. On 28 August he says there were no less than 1260 barricades in the streets.

the mob.¹ Anne of Austria was at last persuaded by the Cardinal and Orleans to relent on condition that the *Parlement* ceased to occupy itself with affairs of state. Broussel, by this time far on the road to Sedan, was fetched back. While he was being fetched, Paris remained in an uproar and the Cardinal was booted and spurred ready for departure.² At last, to his great relief, Broussel appeared on one of the royal *carrosses* and was formally liberated amidst wild enthusiasm. The *Parlement* had won a signal victory over the Court.

Alive to the disaffection in Paris and aware of the paralysis of the only available troops, the *milice bourgeoise*,³ who had remained passive spectators of the revolt, Mazarin saw that the best course for the Court was publicly to shake the dust of Paris from its feet, take up its abode in some neighbouring palace, and temporize until the arrival of Condé. Acting on this device the Court withdrew on 13 September to Rueil *pour prendre l'air* as Mazarin put it.⁴ With recollections of the League, Paris prepared for a siege. But the Court was not in a position to push things to extremities, and, when Condé arrived and showed no disposition to intervene actively, negotiations were opened with the *Parlement*. On 24 October, the very day of the signature of the treaty of Westphalia, an edict confirmed the existence of the *Chambre Saint-Louis*. Six days later the Court returned to Paris, apparently vanquished by the *Parlement*.⁵ But Mazarin was busy concerting schemes for a reversal of the situation, the chief item in which was the capture of Condé for the Court. In order to effect this he even urged the Queen to feign discontent with him.⁶

During the closing months of the year hundreds of calumnious pamphlets, inspired by that prince of intriguers, "the Coadjutor," were circulated denouncing the relations of the

¹ Carnet, xi. 21, and Molé, "Mémoires," op. cit. iii. 254-5.

² Motteville, "Mémoires," op. cit. i. 331.

³ A seventeenth century *Garde Nationale* created by Marie de' Medici (see Normand, op. cit. 329).

⁴ Mazarin, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. iii. 310.

⁵ It was Mazarin himself who advised the return, *ibid.* 220.

⁶ Carnet, x. 77, 78.

Cardinal and Queen. No words were too gross and no aspersions too calumnious for the authors of these *mazarinades*. Things could not go on in this fashion. The Queen would not sacrifice Mazarin, and his enemies could not tolerate him. The matter would have to be submitted to the arbitrament of arms. Some suggested the fortification of the Arsenal, but Mazarin advised a second withdrawal from the capital.¹ On 5 and 6 January, therefore, the comedy of a leisurely withdrawal from Paris was repeated and the Court proceeded to Saint-Germain-en-Laye. For three months desultory hostilities continued, favourable on the whole to the royal cause. Paris was partially blockaded and suffered considerable discomfort. But the *frondeurs* were reinforced by a considerable defection of the more turbulent princes. Longueville, Condé's brother-in-law, and Conti his brother transferred their allegiance and did their best to transform what was to the *Parlement* to some extent a constitutional struggle into a "war of the public weal". The arrival of the princes in Paris gave heart to the more violent *frondeurs*, but the enthusiasm of the bourgeois soon cooled when they found that war involved insecurity, loss of trade, and a considerable drain on their pockets.² The intrigues of the princes with Spain, reminiscent of the worst times of the League, also disgusted the more moderate citizens. By the end of January the majority of Parisians desired a settlement but were as usual overridden by the *enragé* minority.³ In contrast with the far greater privations they had borne without murmuring at the time of the League the *menu peuple* murmured, and the princes had hard work to keep Paris firm.⁴ They were counting on the impending defection of Turenne. Mazarin made large concessions to the trouble-

¹ Condé was by this time actively identified with the Court.

² See "Caquets de l'Accouchée" (ed. 1888), p. 53. "Since the departure of the Court there is no trade."

³ Chéruel, "Histoire de France pendant la Minorité de Louis XIV" (ed. 1879), III. 181.

⁴ See letter of Lionne quoted in Mazarin, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, 275, 276 *note*; but compare Gui Patin, "La France au milieu du XVII^e Siècle d'après la correspondance de G.P.," p. 13, where he asserts that everyone is so resolved against *le Mazarin* that no one grumbles at the price of bread.

some house of Bouillon,¹ in the hope of keeping the great General loyal. Turenne was offered the governorship of Alsace; but all to no purpose; on 15 January the Cardinal writes: "Bouillon has declared himself, and I am not without fear that Turenne will go over"; and he praises God that the Court did not remain in Paris.² Turenne did go over; but Mazarin parried the blow. The army remained loyal, and Turenne could only withdraw into Holland.³ This was at once a triumph and a relief for the royalists. A rebellion in Normandy in favour of Longueville was nipped in the bud. Condé captured Charenton and on 9 February Mazarin wrote: "The city will be brought to reason this very month".⁴ He was right. The parliamentary and bourgeois *fronde*, as distinct from the aristocratic, was anxious for peace, and under the protection of the *milice bourgeoise* entered into negotiations with the Court. In the end of March the Peace of Rueil ended the first *fronde*. The Court agreed to return to Paris and confirmed the declarations of July and October, 1648. This was more than the *frondeurs* had any right to expect, but the approach of the Archduke Leopold and the suspicion that the governor of Soissons had agreed to allow him to cross the Oise had forced the Cardinal's hand. The peace was not final: the more extreme *frondeurs* did not accept it,⁵ and might be expected to make trouble at any moment. Still from April,

¹ Mazarin repeatedly assures Turenne in his frequent and voluminous letters to him, of his genuine desire to satisfy the Bouillons, and complains of their *aigreur*, especially that of the Duchess. See "Lettres," op. cit. III. 242, 256, 260. He gave Turenne the government of Alsace and offered him the hand of one of his nieces (*ibid.* III. 262, 263).

² "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, III. op. cit. 266.

³ Turenne averred that his quarrel was with Mazarin and that he was loyal to the King and Queen. He was probably hoping that Condé would turn coat. He wrote to him (Condé) to assure him that he was not bound to the *Parlement* (Mazarin, "Lettres," op. cit. III. 305 *note*). His defection is a curious illustration of the incurable absence of principle which characterizes the period. It is characteristic of the *Frondes* that no one would avow hostility to the King; it was always hostility to some one else (cp. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, "Mémoires," op. cit. I. 195).

⁴ "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, op. cit. III. 291.

⁵ Mlle. de Montpensier, "Mémoires," op. cit. I. 212.

1649, to January, 1650, there was an uneasy peace during which Condé dealt with the various provincial outbreaks—Guyenne, Normandy, Provence, Anjou. The Court did not feel sufficiently secure to return at once to the capital, and went to Compiègne. Order was gradually restored in Paris and one by one Condé and Orleans and the Royalist leaders returned. The *Parlement* was well disposed. Talon in particular displayed great moderation. In place of the *mazarinades*, apologies for the minister began to appear. No doubt he spent considerable sums to obtain the good-will of the populace.¹ On 18 August the King at last re-entered his capital. Mazarin sat beside Condé in the same carriage as the Queen. The Cardinal's reception was cordial.² Paris, as Gui Patin said, was a Noah's Ark containing good and bad. It certainly contained many who welcomed the return of the Court and others who were willing to cheer Mazarin for the money he was distributing.

Condé had saved the situation. But he had not intervened in order to be dragged at Mazarin's chariot wheels. When he saw that he was not taken at his own valuation, a sufficiently high one, he began to intrigue with other malcontents and a second *fronde* began to take shape; one which could not even pretend to be aiming at constitutional liberties, but which was barefacedly concerned with the distribution of political power alone. Mazarin turned to the Vendômes and offered his niece in marriage to Beaufort's brother, Mercœur. The wedding garments had actually been ordered when Condé's violent intervention put a stop to the proceedings. Mazarin put a good face upon this affront and even (2 October, 1649) agreed to the admission of Condé to a share in all affairs of State.³ At the same time it was declared that none of Mazarin's nephews or nieces would be married without the Prince's consent. Mazarin had seen that Condé's presumption would alienate the *frondeurs*, and he knew that if this dangerous coalition could be broken up he would find means to deal with the prince and to tear up the declaration

¹ Motteville, op. cit. II. 140.

² Patin, op. cit. p. 8.

³ "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, III. 410, 411.

of 2 October. Beaufort was the first to throw Condé over, and Mazarin proceeded to make overtures to Madame de Chévreuse. It is needless to follow the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the Court and the *frondeurs*. Agreements and understandings were arrived at, but hardly one of them endured. A breach between Condé and the Court was now inevitable, and it became a struggle of wits for the support of the nobles and princes. A fanciful plot, the feature of which was the mock assassination of a certain Joly, an intimate of the Coadjutor, and supposed to be popular in Paris, failed to raise the slightest enthusiasm. It only served to alienate the old *frondeurs* from the new. No step, however, was too absurd for Condé. He completely alienated the Queen by his patronage of the insolent Marquis de Jarzès, who ventured to make love to her. The Queen treated him with withering contempt, heaping ridicule on his absurd advances. The support which Condé gave to this presumptuous rascal was unworthy and bitterly resented by the Queen. But the Prince seemed bent on alienating everybody. His final step was to promote a marriage between his ward, Marguerite de Pons, and the Duke of Richelieu in order to secure control of le Havre, of which place Richelieu was Governor. By this time he had offended everyone: the Court, the old *fronde*, the nobility. The Queen and Mazarin entered into close relations with Madame de Chévreuse and the Coadjutor; and on 18 January, 1650, to the delight of "Noah's Ark" Paris, Condé, his brother-in-law Conti, and the Duke of Longueville were arrested and thrown into Vincennes. Conti, who was very crestfallen, asked to be furnished with a copy of the Imitation of Christ, "and I," said Condé, "would like the imitation of M. de Beaufort" (who had escaped from the same prison two years before).¹ Deprived in this way of their leaders, the *frondeurs* were paralysed. The King journeyed about the Provinces with good effect; Bordeaux alone made a serious resistance and capitulated in October. The chief danger was from Turenne, who had invaded France from the North-East in conjunction with the Archduke Leopold, and was threatening Paris. The usual

¹ Patin, op. cit. p. 67.

panic seized the capital. Mazarin advanced into Champagne and was present in person at the capture of Rethel, an important fortress on the Aisne which had fallen into the enemy's hands. The royalists then turned on Turenne, who was hastening to the relief of the fortress, and defeated him on 15 December, 1650. Mazarin was not present at this action, but the campaign which he had personally organized was a conspicuous triumph for him.¹

But the alliance with Madame de Chévreuse and the Coadjutor was as unstable as the other alliances of the period. They began to make overtures to Beaufort, which so alarmed the Cardinal that he fled from Court and took refuge at Bruhl (6 February, 1651). With his disappearance all excuse for rebellion was removed. The Court was paralysed by his loss and for a moment there was talk of summoning a States General. Very soon, however, the forces which had united against Mazarin were turned against Condé, who withdrew from Paris and was soon in direct relations with Spain. If Mazarin could have kept quiet the union against the prince would probably have endured. But he was fearful of losing his influence with the Queen, and when in December he returned² things relapsed into their former condition.

Harcourt held Condé in the south while Mazarin seized Angers and reduced Anjou. The Court with Turenne, who after some hesitation had declared for the Crown, was on the lower Loire. Nemours and Beaufort advanced with a Spanish contingent from the north in the interests of Condé. The Prince joined them in April, after Mademoiselle, the Amazon daughter of Monsieur, had shut the gates of Orleans against

¹ For Mazarin's interference in military affairs, see Colbert's letters. It brought him much unpopularity. "Vous avez su qu'il arriva hier ici (Compiègne) de l'armée et qu'il y retourne demain à dessein de la faire agir puissamment : l'effet de sa presence est qu'il dégoute fort tous les officiers généraux et qu'il les détache pour ainsi dire de zèle et d'affection pour le service." Clément, "Histoire de Colbert" (1892), I. 13.

² Mazarin rejoined the Court at Poitiers, 28 January, 1652. Colbert wrote to Mazarin advising his return and saying that he had nothing to fear from the Parisians, 1 November, 1652 (Colbert, "Lettres," ed. Clément, 1861, etc., I. 197).

the royal forces.¹ Turenne held his own in the Battle of Bleneau and established the Court at Saint-Germain. He then blocked the *frondeurs* at Étampes.

The Duke of Lorraine, with his famous army of mercenaries, next threatened the Royalists, but was successfully bought off. While Turenne was occupied in negotiations with him, Condé and the *frondeurs* had advanced to Saint-Cloud and were hovering round Paris. Turenne came to Saint-Denis and gave battle outside the Porte Saint-Antoine. Condé performed prodigies of valour. Monsieur was in Paris but refused to move; his more determined daughter opened the gates to the *frondeurs* at the crisis of the battle and deprived Turenne of his victory.

The state of affairs in the capital was baffling in the extreme. No one knew on which side his neighbour was or what the next day might bring forth. On 4 July the Hôtel de Ville was set on fire and many persons perished. Insurrectionary government was established: Broussel was made provost of the merchants and Beaufort governor of the City, Monsieur Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom and Condé himself Commandant-General of the armies. But in reality it was every man for himself: no one believed in the permanence of any combination. A sort of spell seemed to be cast over every one which made continuity of policy impossible. The only cry which had any ring of sincerity was *point de Mazarin*, and in spite of this many *frondeurs* were negotiating with the Cardinal. Seeing that he was the great obstacle to peace, Mazarin once more cut the ground away under the feet of the *frondeurs* by withdrawing from Court. The movement collapsed, and on 21 October the King entered Paris amidst a well-organized jubilation. This time the Court went to the Louvre, having had experience of the inconveniences of an unfortified habitation. In February the inevitable happened: Mazarin was recalled. The *fronde*, although it continued to smoulder round Bordeaux, was to all intents and purposes at an end. Five

¹ Mademoiselle entered Orleans on 27 March, 1652, with the object of preserving the city from Mazarin. Orleans was her apanage. See "Récit de l'entrée de Mademoiselle de Montpensier dans la ville d'Orléans le 27 mars 1652" (Orleans, 1876).

years of misery and shameful levity had been without political result. Condé was condemned by the *Parlement* to lose his status as prince of the blood and to suffer death at the King's pleasure; Conti saved himself by marrying Mazarin's niece. The peace, in fact, was made with as much levity as the war which it concluded. "Mademoiselle," who delighted in her Amazonian pose, did not "come in" till 1667.

The period of the *frondes* is perhaps the most deplorable in the history of France. Other periods saw as much cruelty and as much suffering, but none saw so much cruelty and suffering for causes so trivial. There had been signs of a somewhat corresponding levity among the combatants in the Wars of Religion (as in Condé's ride to Orleans), and since then the ostracism of the nobles from public life had borne fruit. The *frondes* had neither a programme of reform nor a reputable leader; their champions were an insignificant old soldier like Broussel, a dandy like Beaufort, and an intriguing churchman like de Retz. The causes of all the bloodshed and misery were purely frivolous; neither religion, patriotism, constitutionalism, nor even dynastic interests were at stake. So much was this the case that a new name had to be invented for hostilities which could not be dignified with the name of civil war. The word *fronde* was used of children who threw stones and ran away on the appearance of the police only to begin again on their disappearance; and the name is the best commentary on the period.

The *frondes* had had their effect on European affairs. Mazarin had been terribly hampered in his conduct of the war by internal complications. But even when things were at their worst he had found time to attend to foreign affairs—for to him politics were simply foreign affairs, interrupted and complicated by internal affairs. France's losses during the five years had been considerable. In Italy she had lost her footing in Tuscany and Casale; in Flanders, Dunkirk, Gravelines, Mardick, and Furnes, and in Spain Catalonia. Condé's defection in 1653 had made matters worse; and in 1656 Mazarin, alarmed at the Prince's success (he had forced Turenne to raise the siege of Valenciennes), began to look to

England for assistance. Cromwell hated Spain, and, in spite of the grudge which he owed France for harbouring the Stuarts, signed (March, 1657) an alliance with France. Dunkirk and Mardick were to be England's reward. Mazarin was in such straits that he was forced to agree to the creation of this new Calais.

In the same year the Emperor died (April), and for a moment Mazarin dreamt of establishing the King upon the imperial and himself upon the papal throne. This was the wildest chimera. The election of Ferdinand's son Leopold was a certainty; but it was possible for France to put some restrictions on the Empire by co-operating with the smaller German States. So in August, 1658, was formed the League of the Rhine, of which the Elector of Mainz was the head and to which France was admitted. This league was all to the advantage for France. It meant that Austria would continually be thrown back eastwards and that France would time after time—at Nimeguen, at Utrecht, at Hubertsburg, at Campo Formio, at Lunéville, at Pressburg, at Vienna (1809)—be the chief agent in that process.

Meanwhile the programme which had been concerted between France and England was being carried out to the advantage of the latter. Six thousand English troops crossed the Channel and the maritime towns were besieged; in October, 1657, Mardick was taken and handed to the English. In May, 1658, Turenne invested Dunkirk and defeated, on 14 June, a relieving force under Don John of Austria and Condé on the Dunkirk dunes: Dunkirk capitulated, and was in turn duly handed to the English. In August, Gravelines surrendered and was retained by France: Turenne then overran Flanders. Spain was at her last gasp, but the knowledge that the marriage of the Infanta to the young King of France would be a condition of any settlement, encouraged her to continue fighting. Philip IV had only one feeble son; the chance that the Infanta might inherit Spain was therefore not remote. Philip could not bear the idea of the union of the two crowns on the head of a Bourbon, but neither could he bear to see Louis' hand bestowed elsewhere. Mazarin was quick to

realize this and acted at once. Louis (as readers of the *Vicomte de Bragelonne* know) was in love with the Cardinal's niece, Marie de Mancini; but Mazarin firmly refused to sanction the match, thus abandoning in the interest of France the most superb opportunity for the aggrandizement of his house, an object which was notoriously near his heart. Then he proceeded to play on the feelings of the King of Spain; engineered a clever pretence of a match between Louis and Margaret of Savoy, and arranged a meeting of the King and Princess at Lyons, where the preliminaries of matrimonial alliance were concluded. When he heard what was going on, Philip is reported to have said, "that cannot and shall not be".¹ The ruse was entirely successful. Spain was in serious straits, with a Portuguese war on her hands and things going wrong in the Netherlands. A message was sent to Mazarin that Philip would agree to the marriage and make peace. "Good news!" said the Cardinal when he brought the information to the Queen, "I bring you peace and the Infanta."² The unfortunate Savoyard princess was appeased with presents, and the serious business of arranging terms with Spain began. One of the most difficult of the outstanding questions was that of the treatment of Condé. Spain stood out loyally for the traitorous prince, and France was at last obliged to rehabilitate him—perhaps the most humiliating condition in the Peace of the Pyrenees. She also abandoned her ally the King of Portugal, and handed over Oudenarde, Dixmuiden, and Furnes with other places in the Netherlands, as well as in Italy, Franche Comté, and the Spanish Marches. But she gained far more than she lost. She laid her hand on Lorraine, she received Philippeville, Marienburg, and Avesnes (as Condé's ransom); Artois (less Aire and Saint-Omer), Cerdagne, and above all Roussillon (the old prize of Louis XI), Gravelines, Bourbourg, Saint-Venant, Landrecies, Quesnoy, Thionville, Montmédy, Damvilliers; these were no mean acquisitions, and though there was no wholesale annexation in the Low Countries, there was a general and acceptable rounding off of frontiers. Moreover, by the engagement of Louis to the Infanta, Mazarin

¹ Motteville, *op. cit.* III. 159.

² *Ibid.* III. 163.

had secured for the former a "sporting chance" of the Spanish throne. The match was in fact a splendid gamble, and in the end it fell out favourably for France. A Bourbon eventually sat on the Spanish throne. It is true that the Infanta renounced her claims on her marriage; but the renunciation was conditional on the payment of an immense dowry (500,000 crowns) which was never paid. Philip himself roundly called the renunciation nonsense and declared that if his son failed the Infanta was bound to inherit.¹

This dynastic conspiracy has been called a brilliant blunder; a blind subordination of national to dynastic interests. On the other hand it is difficult to see how the war could have ended in any other way, how the Low Countries could have been acquired save by marriage, or how Austria could have been checked if the Infanta had married Leopold, as she assuredly would have done had she not married Louis. It was force of circumstance as much as the genius of Mazarin that dictated the Peace of The Pyrenees. That peace was followed in May by the Treaties of Oliva and Copenhagen, which brought to an end the hostilities which had been raging amongst the Baltic powers.

Mazarin did not long survive his triumph. After the peace he was more than ever supreme. His splendour was extreme; his power uncontested; his family was almost on a level with royalty; his five nieces made valuable matrimonial alliances. Mercœur, Conti, Eugene of Savoy, Bouillon were all Mazarin's nephews by marriage. The Cardinal recognized his responsibility for the education of the young King, and to him Louis owed much of his training in statecraft. But he would never have stood aside to make way for Louis; and Louis, who was probably privy to his mother's relations with the Cardinal (they called him *le confident* in their correspondence), would never have brought himself to shake off the domination of the Minister. Death, therefore, was the only solution, and on 9 March, 1661, that solution came.

Mazarin had brought France to a very high pitch of Euro-

¹ Motteville, op. cit. III. 209.

pean greatness; but he had done so at the cost of untold misery. The condition of the country during the *frondes* was pitiable. The horrors of the worst kind of warfare had penetrated every corner. Petty in themselves, in cruelty the *frondes* rivalled the terrible Thirty Years War. The frontiers had suffered most: Champagne, Picardy, Burgundy, and Lorraine were a waste. The exactions were appalling: a town of 12,000 inhabitants paid over 55,000 *livres per annum* to the war chest.¹ The monasteries were crowded with refugees whose stock ranged through the gardens and cloisters. Plague went hand-in-hand with famine and ravage and rapine with both. It is needless to labour the point: no description could adequately paint the material ruin caused by the *frondes*.² It was not that Mazarin was regardless of the welfare of the country: he was greatly concerned for it. Only he conceived welfare to be a matter of European position and diplomatic success. Welfare of this kind he pursued with a patience and dexterity which are beyond all praise. His mistake—and it was perhaps more the mistake of the age than the individual—was his failure to appreciate the importance of internal prosperity.

The only relief to this dark picture is provided by religion. After the troubles of the religious wars there had been a reaction towards a form of religion which should admit the virtue of patriotism and would not be a continual challenge to the civil authority. Such a reaction involved a revival of Gallicanism; for the essence of Gallicanism was the vindication of the right of the State to act independently of the Church, and the identification so far as was possible of the interests of Church and State. These years, therefore, saw Gallicanism in the ascendant. Even the Jesuits became impregnated with its principles, and they were then at the height of their power. But

¹ Feillet, *op. cit.* p. 31.

² Mazarin himself wrote on 17 August, 1643, to the *intendant* of Anjou about the distress of the father of a certain doctor who, having less than 100 *livres* of revenue, was taxed at 200 for the *taille* and compelled to take twenty-seven bushels of salt at 10 *livres* a bushel, "Lettres," ed. Chéruel, *op. cit.* I. 286.

the process of re-emphasizing the national character of the Church in France had the inevitable result. As its national force increased its spiritual force abated. Political stability was purchased at the cost of religious principle. The casuistry which the Jesuits built upon the new Gallicanism tended to reduce religion to a series of empty formalities.

It will be remembered how the first outcry against the insinuations of the fifteenth century Church had in France proceeded from within the Church itself; how the early French reformers had dreamt of a revival of spirituality within the bounds of the Church; and how they had been swept away by the fiercer tide of reformation which had its origin in Geneva. So it was now. The protests against the new formalism which was the offspring of the Gallican revival came from men who desired to reform the Church from within. The movement originated in the publication in 1640 of a posthumous work of Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres, who had died in 1538. This work was entitled 'Augustinus,' and was a vindication of Saint Augustine's doctrines with regard to sin and the efficacy of divine grace, as against the externalism of the Jesuits. Jansen's doctrines were sponsored by his friend Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbot of Saint-Cyran; and the seed thus sown took deep root in the monastery of Port-Royal—a Cistercian foundation which had been transferred from a site not far from Versailles to the Rue de la Bourbe in Paris.¹ Here a strict discipline grew up under Marie Angélique d'Arnauld, a member of a remarkable family of evangelists, of whom Balzac wrote: "the entire household argues, preaches, persuades; and one Arnauld is worth a dozen Epictetuses". The ground therefore was ready at Port-Royal for the seed which Jansen had sown. In 1643 Antoine d'Arnauld, brother of Marie Angélique, published a work called 'La fréquente Communion,' in which he pleaded eloquently for austerity, penitence, and amendment of life. 'La fréquente Communion' had an immense circulation, and was the chief agent in bringing the principles of Jansenism to the notice of ordinary people. Pascal's conversion in 1646, and the pub-

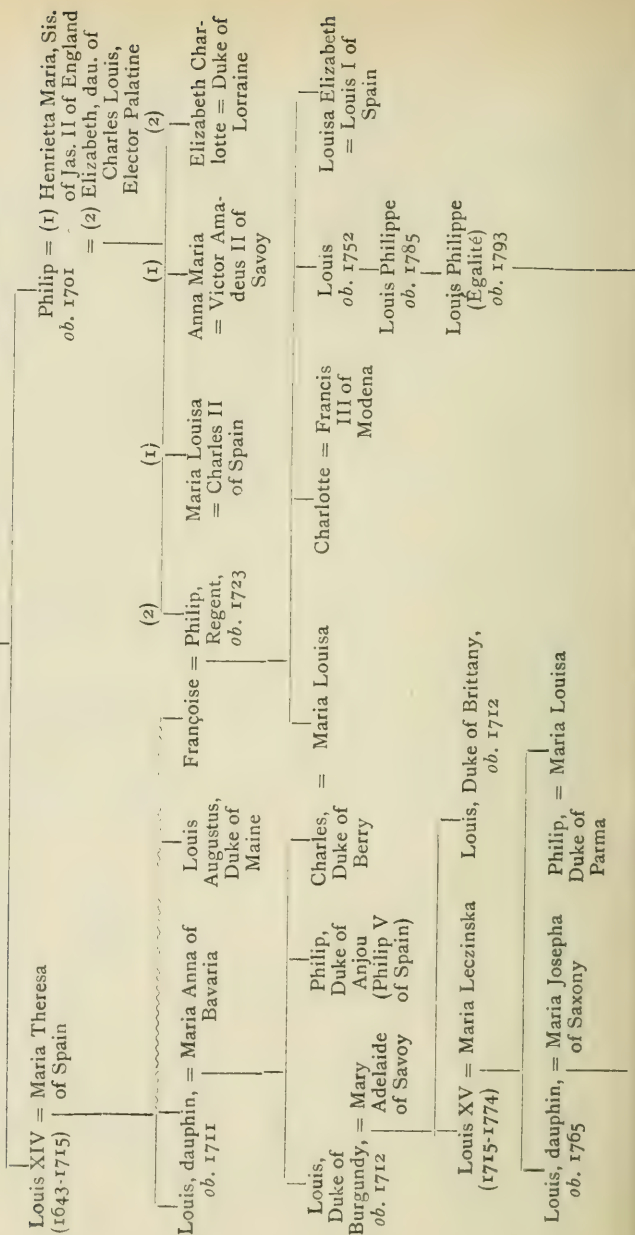
¹ Now a maternity hospital, No. 119 Boulevard de Port-Royal.

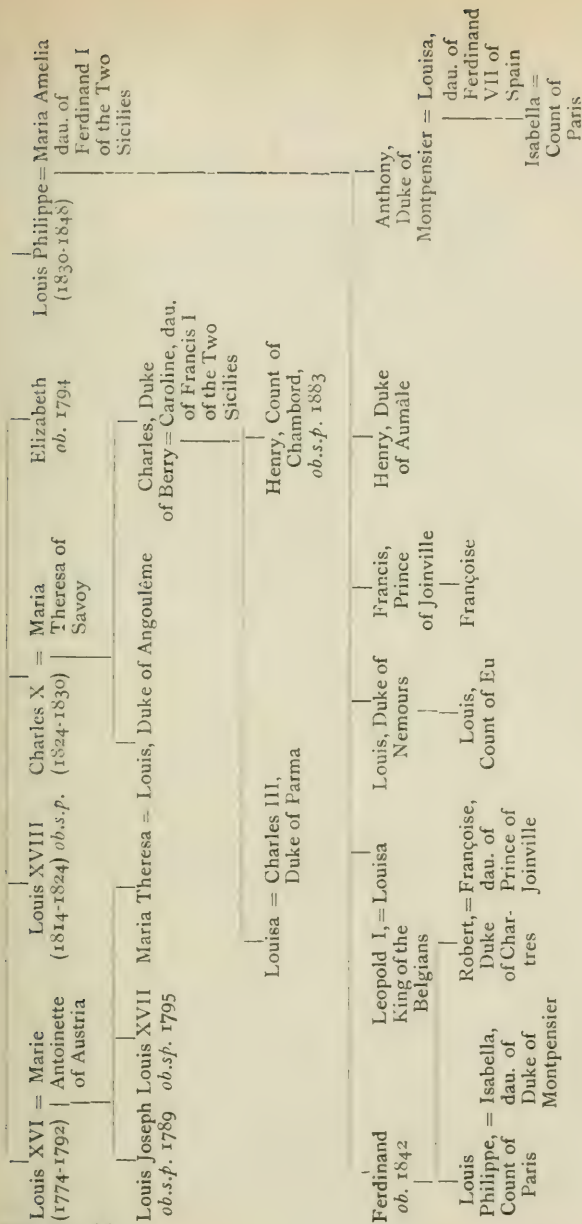
lication of his 'Lettres Provinciales,' ranged genius on the side of the revivalists. During the *frondes* the new ideas had taken more definite shape and began to arouse the violent opposition of the orthodox. Unfortunately the orthodox were in a position of vantage. The Sorbonne condemned five of the main propositions of the 'Augustinus'. Supported as it was by the signatures of eighty-five bishops, this condemnation was confirmed, though only after some hesitation, by the Pope in 1653. Arnauld, who defended the Jansenists by maintaining that Jansen had not intended the propositions in the sense in which they had been condemned, was expelled from the Sorbonne (1656), and his expulsion seemed likely to be followed by that of the Jansenists from the Catholic Church. The condemnation was defined and amplified by Alexander VII. Suspected Jansenists were compelled to sign a declaration affirming that the 'Augustinus' had been justly condemned. An era of persecution began. But when in 1665 the King determined to enforce the declaration generally, opposition assumed serious proportions, and Clement IX was glad to alleviate the oppression of the Jansenists (1669). The "Peace of Clement IX" brought the struggle to a temporary close. The great days of Jansenism were already past. The lofty spiritual aims with which they had started had been lost in a maze of legal quibbles quite unworthy of the cause and of the men who advanced them.

THE HOUSE OF BOURBON

Louis XIII = Anne of Austria
(1610-1643)

[DUKES OF ORLEANS]





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CHAPTER XXIV

LOUIS XIV

(PART I)

(1661-1684)

THE outstanding result of the epoch which closed with the death of Mazarin was the final decline of the feudal nobility. It had perished ingloriously in the mean little wars of the *frondes*. The real injury wrought by the *frondes* was, however, not so much the decline as the discredit of the *noblesse*. No class that had behaved with the irresponsible levity of the French *noblesse* in that period could be employed in the development of the new France that was to succeed the feudal France which had perished. The supersession of the feudal nobility had been ensured by Richelieu, their total disgrace was the outcome of the *frondes*. From that time they were condemned to the position of privileged irresponsibility in which they were caught by the Revolution of 1789. The decay of the nobility combined with the absence of constitutional bodies to let in the centralized system of government to which France by nature and antecedents has always been inclined.¹ Not only were the nobility discredited but the States General had fallen into abeyance and were no longer even talked of. The *Parlement* had kept up the struggle a little longer, but it too was now discredited owing to its share in the *frondes*. The provincial *états* lingered and remained for long an unmitigated nuisance to bureaucracy. But with devoted local agents and the material for copious local bribery, it was found possible to reduce them to subservience.

As for the people, under these circumstances they were

¹ See Bodley, "France," *op. cit. passim*; Hanotaux, "l'Énergie française," *op. cit.*

dumb as a sheep before the shearers, and until they could find a voice they simply did not count. Their misery was great. All the old abuses continued; *taille* and *gabelle*, with the abominable injustice of their incidence and the vile methods by which they were levied. The lower classes had suffered much from the war and still suffered much from taxation begotten of war: it was only the riches of France which enabled her to bear so great a weight of taxation without succumbing. The middle classes, since the introduction of the *paulette*, abandoned themselves to the insatiable craze for offices and pensions which bred that *maladie de fonctionnarisme* which, as M. Méline has pointed out, is still one of the chief scourges of France.¹ To buy an office was to purchase an annuity and an annuity which could be bequeathed, and there was fierce competition for the more lucrative offices. Normal ambitions were paralysed by this unhealthy competition. Colbert enumerated no less than 45,000 posts of justice and finance, with the comment that there were 40,000 too many. Weighted by this system the middle class was as dumb as the lower, or if it opened its mouth it was to protest against the abolition of the *paulette* which made the system possible. A voiceless people, a corrupted *bourgeoisie*, a discredited *noblesse*; the moment of despotic centralization had arrived.

No one could have surmised that such a system would have found so consummate an exponent in the young King who had submissively accepted the domination of Mazarin.² Louis was now twenty-two. Nothing but good was known of him. He had indeed been entirely subordinate to his mother's minister, but on the occasions when he had come before the public eye the impression he had made had been excellent. Every one had admired his bearing, his good looks, and his horsemanship, when he rode through Paris. Would he prove

¹ Méline, "Le Retour à la terre," op. cit. p. 198. This snobbery of officialdom at any rate militated against caste.

² For Louis' *apologia* for his effacement during his minority, see "Mémoires historiques," in "Œuvres de Louis XIV" (ed. 1805), 1, 6 sqq. He pleads the disorders and difficulties of the period; the affection between him and Mazarin; the danger of taking a premature false step.

to be the man to guide the destinies of France in this period of transition? He quickly gave proof that for good or for ill he was at any rate to leave his mark. Beyond all expectation he made himself a factor to be reckoned with. Asked by the President of the Assembly of the Clergy to whom, after the death of Mazarin, they should make their reports, he replied, "to me, Sirs". Remembering his passive acceptance of the ascendancy of the Cardinal, men were inclined to smile. They did not know of what stuff Louis was made. During a minority prolonged beyond its normal term, he had had time and food for reflection. Like his cousin of England, though in a minor degree, he had "been on his travels," and no more than Charles II did he wish to repeat the experiment. Indeed the *frondes* had got on his nerves and made an impression altogether out of proportion to their importance on a mind unquestionably inelastic. It was the memory of the *frondes* that determined him to have no first minister who could bring on his crown the unpopularity that Mazarin had brought on the Regency. The spirit of the famous *dictum*, "l'État c'est Moi,"¹ was as much that of fear as that of self-reliance.

Both in his weakness and in his strength Louis XIV proved a scourge to his country. He had not the imagination to be the apostle of the new era, and he had the vanity, the self-confidence, and the jealous exclusiveness to prevent any one else performing that part. And he sinned against the light; for the apostle was not wanting. A man of more imagination or of less vanity would have allowed Colbert to work out, as he was qualified to do, the salvation of France. Not so Louis; he appreciated the value of Colbert's genius only so far as it was useful to his own purpose. He saw in him only a devoted servant who would make France richer and therefore more taxable; a great financier who would provide the money which was essential to his conceptions of glory.² His greatest error,

¹ The words appear to be really Voltaire's, but they are an entirely just expression of the King's intentions.

² "Œuvres," op. cit. i. 7: "Préférant sans doute dans mon cœur à toutes choses et à la vie même, une haute réputation, si je pouvais l'acquérir"; and p. 8: "un seul désir de gloire".

perhaps, was the prostitution of the intellect and ideals of Colbert.

Autocratic, grandiose, industrious, and orderly, the King was endowed with the means to carry out whatever task he set himself. It was all the more unfortunate that he wrongly conceived it. Here were all the remnants of feudalism ready to be turned to use in the new regime, and Louis in his rigid mediocrity saw only the vices of the old system and was blind to its possibilities. He set himself to crush and emasculate it and to concentrate all power in his own hands. This was a lamentable blunder, the consequences of which were disastrous to France. The *Parlement* and the *noblesse* had no doubt discredited themselves in the *frondes*, but Louis, had he been endowed with real breadth of view, would have looked to the future rather than the past and set himself to find useful employment in the new era for both. In failing to do so he made himself one of the architects of the Revolution.

For evil or good this man of mediocrity was to dominate a prolonged period in the history of France and of Europe. Therefore, although in no sense great, he is unquestionably important: thus he claims our attention and we must pause to examine his characteristics. To consider him as a man is difficult; he was never anything more than a professional king; one who glorified and revelled in his profession until it became a second nature. He had the grand and distant manner, the affable condescension, and the consummate pose which give dignity, if they give nothing else, to kingship. Never for a moment did he weary of the pedestal on which he continually stood. No sense of humour mitigated the pomposity of his behaviour. It is impossible not to marvel at the success to which artificiality was carried in him. Believing himself something more than man, he managed to make others accept him at his own valuation. Passionate in love, for example, he managed to give an Homeric turn even to his love affairs: what did adultery or double adultery signify to Mars or Jupiter? But his unerring judgment told him that an elderly man cannot abandon himself to carnal affections without loss of dignity, and that was the

one loss he was not prepared to suffer. He was too sagacious, too self-controlled, to fall into the error of Francis I or Henry IV. So at the age of forty-six he deliberately abandoned illicit love and settled down to respectable domesticity with Madame de Maintenon.

But to do him justice he had more than the pose of kingship. He had a right appreciation of the demands which his position made on his time and intellect. Of a naturally serious temperament, he developed a perfect passion for business. He was unwearied in his attendance at Councils and insisted on understanding every detail. As his mind worked very slowly this was no easy task; and Colbert had literally to drum his schemes into his master's head. He performed every act in his royal existence in the same methodical and painstaking fashion. Wars, carousals, fêtes, and councils were all carried out with the same deliberate and appalling thoroughness. In everything he is the same laborious and unimaginative pomposity whose character is impressed on Versailles and the east front of the Louvre.

At first men thought he would soon tire of his self-appointed task and called his ardour "*une chaleur qui devait bientôt se ralentir*".¹ But he saw that it was worse to have occasional periods of wakefulness than to sleep always,² and during the whole of his long life he never relaxed his labours. In his *Mémoires* addressed to his son he warned the *Dauphin* that he "would find nothing so laborious as great idleness"; he himself, he said, had made it a habit to work "twice a day for two or three hours with different people without reckoning private labours".³ In other passages he reflects that it is curious that love of work—"a virtue so necessary to sovereigns"—is so rarely found in them.⁴ With this love of work he developed a passion for order and delighted in getting every detail into its proper pigeon hole. Curran once said to Grattan: "You

¹ "Œuvres de Louis XIV," op. cit. I. 37. ² *Ibid.* op. cit. I. 46.

³ *Ibid.* op. cit. I. 19 *sqq.* Another characteristic piece of advice was: "If you feel yourself inclined to be carried away by your passions, first don't; secondly, if you do, don't do it in business hours".

⁴ *Ibid.* op. cit. I. 105. Elsewhere he says, "*le travail n'épouvante que les âmes faibles*," I. 117.

would be the greatest man of your age, Grattan, if you would buy a few yards of red tape and tie up your bills and papers"; it was not this fault, at any rate, that stood between Louis and greatness. This energy, unremitting rather than restless, the amount of indoor work which it entailed, combined, with an immense appetite and bad teeth, and in the end a bad *fistula*, to ruin the King's health. Throughout his later life he suffered from chronic stomachic maladies, and although he never allowed ill-health to interfere with his labours, we may safely attribute the ungraciousness of his later years and the worst of his mistakes at least in part to illness. To a great extent his was the reign of a dyspeptic.

It is interesting to trace in Louis XIV the fruits of his ancestry and upbringing. The trail of Mazarin is over him. Like the Cardinal he is inclined to treat internal policy as a department in foreign affairs, to distrust the people and to regard the nation as a milch-cow. Like him he is a cynic, distrustful, treacherous, and unsympathetic. In diplomacy indeed he carries cynicism beyond all bounds, regarding treaties as no more than "polite formalities".¹ But if he had learnt at the Cardinal's footstool he had also inherited something from his ancestors. It has ever been the misfortune of France that so few of her rulers have been French in character. During the period of the later Valois—Catherine de' Medici and her sons—France was ruled by Italians and on Italian lines. Henry IV had provided an interlude, all too brief, of genuinely national monarchy. We look in vain for the smallest trace of Henry IV in Louis XIV. He was the grandson not only of that monarch but also of Philip II of Spain. He was inarticulate,² pompous, and autocratic, not frank and debonair like the Béarnais. He was, in fact, a Habsburg of the Habsburgs, and only in his conception of glory, military glory predominating, does he stand out as a Frenchman.

¹ For his conception of good faith in treaties see the chapter "Sur la foi des traités," "Œuvres," I. 63. Where there was natural antagonism, as between France and Spain, treaties ought not to count. Cp. the unsuccessful attempt to bribe Clarendon, *ibid.* I. 66, 67.

² "He spoke little but always well," says Voltaire ("Œuvres," XIV. 266).

From the evil genius of the period we may turn at once for the sake of contrast to the good. Jean Baptiste Colbert, aged forty in 1659, was the son of a draper in Reims; had received a business training in the commercial establishment of an uncle at Troyes; had served in a bank at Lyons, and had entered the service of Mazarin, who, wildly erratic in finance, wanted a man of business head and training to look after his affairs. Colbert was in the most intimate relations with Mazarin during his later years, and it was at the dying minister's request that Louis XIV took him into his service.¹ We are not accustomed to associate financial and economic qualities with idealism, yet the most remarkable thing about Colbert was his profound idealism. Recognizing that France had arrived at the parting of the ways, he had dreamt a noble dream of the part she was to play in the period that was opening. Like all great statesmen, in fact, he worked not for his own generation but for posterity. The fundamental doctrine of his economic faith is expressed in one of his letters.² "It is almost certain that each state in proportion to its greatness and extent is sufficiently supplied with means of subsistence within itself, provided that these means are well and faithfully administered." The self-sufficing state was Colbert's ideal; and undoubtedly he carried it too far. In his anxiety to realize it he lost sight of the importance of free exchange. Supremacy in certain branches and free exchange in others would have been a more profitable ideal. To convert vineyards into corn-fields may have been necessary under prevailing conditions, but it was not sound economics. Be this as it may, the promotion of industry by every possible means was the fundamental principle of Colbert's policy.

Another principle was that of "order". Louis XIV has given us from his own pen a most striking picture of the

¹ In his will Mazarin said, "prie le Roy de se servir de lui (Colbert) étant fort fidèle". Colbert used to boast that when Mazarin was dying he said to the King: "Sir, I owe you everything; but I pay some portion of my debt in bequeathing you Colbert" (Choisy, "Mémoires," in Petitot, op. cit. LXIII. p. 229).

² Colbert, "Lettres," op. cit. II. 18.

disorder prevalent at his accession. "The finances," he says, "were utterly exhausted . . . many of the most necessary expenses of my household and person were either retarded beyond all decency or paid on credit. At the same time business men were well off, who at once covered their malversations by all sorts of artifices and uncovered them by an insolent and audacious luxury. . . . The manner in which the receipts and expenditure were recorded is incredible. My revenues were not controlled by my treasurers but by clerks of the *surintendant*, who confused them with his private expenses. Money was disbursed at the time, in the form, and for the object, which suited them."¹ Colbert was alive to this disorder, and even more than his master he resented it. He was profoundly convinced that if it could be rectified France might assume her true position as one of the most prosperous of European states.

The system of "order" applied to finance involved a candid periodical budget. To face the situation, to see accurately how you stand, is the first preliminary in all financial reform. Year by year, even month by month, Colbert laid before his master statements of financial affairs. The first step was taken, but it was useless without the second. To know accurately the size of the cloth is useless if you do not cut the coat accordingly; and this Louis flatly refused to do. He looked the situation steadily in the face, listened gravely to his minister's recommendations of economy—and proceeded calmly to increase his expenditure. The servant of such a king was foredoomed to failure. Colbert made his mistakes; his economic system is open to criticism; his financial administration was not perfect; he died unduly rich: but in the main the praise belongs to him and the blame to Louis.

The first condition in the creation of the reign of order at which Colbert aimed was the removal of the apostle of disorder. Louis found three ministers of the Mazarin regime in

¹ "Œuvres," op. cit. i. 109, and cp. p. 110. In spite of the immense *tailles* there were only 21,000,000 *livres per annum* in the Treasury, and these were spent two years ahead; and p. 9 of same volume; "le désordre regnait partout," etc.

office—le Tellier, Lionne, and Fouquet. Fouquet had been the chief agent in the financial dilapidations which had marked the rule of Mazarin. He had accumulated an immense fortune with which he made extravagant display. He was the emblem of all that was worst in the old regime and, assuming that Louis would soon weary of the business of State, he expected to continue his malpractices in the new. His marvellous palace of Vaux contrasted strangely with the miserable condition of the royal residences. He was foolish enough to make an ostentatious display of his wealth when Louis visited him there. The fêtes of Vaux were much to Louis' taste and made a great impression on him, only he thought that they were better suited to a royal than a ministerial *ménage*. Lulli and Molière should in future amuse his Court, not that of his minister. Colbert was willing enough to join in a conspiracy against the *surintendant*, whose arrest was effected with accomplished perfidy. Fouquet was accused before a *chambre de justice* specially appointed to inquire into abuses. He defended himself with energy and skill.¹ The trial dragged on for three years and in the end he was condemned to banishment: the King increased this penalty to imprisonment for life. Fouquet was confined in the fortress of Pignerolo where he was treated with great severity; he died there in 1680.

The removal of Fouquet left the ground clear for the establishment of the new regime. For the moment Europe was at peace and there was an excellent opportunity for the adjustment of home affairs. It was not a prosperous France at which the King aimed so much as a France reduced to a machine subservient to his will: autocracy not for the benefit of the country but for its own sake. The first six years saw the new regime introduced. This, therefore, is the moment to gain a knowledge of the engine that Louis forged for his own ends. The system was one of councils, over all of which, with a single exception, the King presided and each of which was manned by his nominees. No one had any right to sit on any

¹ Mme. de Sévigné in her "Letters" (ed. Grouvelle, 1818), I. 30 *sqq.*, refers to the spirit and power of Fouquet's defence.

of them save by the King's pleasure. The principal councils were the *conseil d'en haut* or *d'état*, a body of four or five members which met three times a week and had cognizance of all great questions of State. It was the chief council, but informal and purely advisory. The decision on all questions was reserved to the King. The *conseil des dépêches* dealt with internal affairs in much the same way, the *conseil des finances* with questions of taxation. The *conseil privé* or *des parties*, a judicial body comprising a large number of lawyers, had indefinite but supreme judicial functions, resembling those of the modern *cour de cassation*. The King did not usually preside over its deliberations.¹ The whole system of councils was, and was intended to be, irregular. No member of any of them had any rights or privileges, but simply served the King in the way that seemed best to the King. The most important feature was the exclusion of the Princes of the Blood and the great nobles. Both the councils and the ministry were manned by professional men. The most that Louis would countenance was the establishment of ministerial "dynasties," son often succeeding father in the offices of State. Such were the le Telliers and the Colberts, and by this means a certain continuity was preserved. Of all the old feudal offices that of Chancellor alone survived, and even the Chancellor's powers were limited by the creation of the office of *Garde des Sceaux* and the removal of the seals of State from his custody. Such was the bureaucracy created by Louis XIV, and by dint of perseverance and sedulous attention to business he made this somewhat clumsy machine run with wonderful smoothness.

In the provinces the task of making the power of the Crown felt was more difficult. The diversity of France, due as it was to distinctions of race, language, climate, and religion, was certainly a grave problem to a government which abhorred diversity as nature abhors a *vacuum*. Even in our own day the idea of preserving local idiosyncrasies within the State is regarded with dislike by many; it need not therefore occasion surprise that it was distasteful to the arch-priest of unity and order. And in truth the local privileges and dis-

¹ But he sometimes attended it (see "Œuvres," op. cit. i. 31).

tinctions in France were a grievous obstacle to government. There was no common law ; hardly even a common language.¹ On every side there was shreds of cherished autonomy and still more cherished immunity. Whole provinces sometimes, sometimes single *communes*, were in enjoyment of special privileges. The provincial *états* of Languedoc and Brittany had preserved their existence and their right to vote their contribution to the *taille* (*don gratuit*).² On every occasion when this was done the most elaborate steps had to be taken to manipulate the deputies. Louis³ claimed that, so far from haggling with the provincial *états*, he demanded the exact sum he required unconditionally ; but the State papers show that his boast was premature. In other respects the local *états* were bound to be an obstacle to reform. Possessed by the most antiquated and reactionary notions, they stood in the way of every advance. They opposed, for instance, the grand scheme for the junction of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean by the Canal des deux Mers,⁴ and to the Aigues-Mortes Canal the *états* of Languedoc offered the most strenuous resistance on the characteristic ground that too much corn would be grown in the district drained by the canal ! In the same way the municipalities were a constant source of trouble to the Government.⁵ They had run into heavy debt and were as stupid and reactionary in their ideas as the *états*. Their reform was both necessary and welcome. It was not therefore that no reform was needed in these directions, but that the Government approached their task in too drastic a fashion.⁶ Little attempt was made to

¹ See Mme. de Sévigné, "Lettres," op. cit. iv. 50, where she speaks of an Assembly of Bretons : "six or seven thousand persons, the most learned of whom does not understand a word of French".

² Colbert, "Lettres," op. cit. iv. 84.

³ "Œuvres," op. cit. i. 158-9.

⁴ The Canal des deux Mers was engineered by Riquet, a native of Béziers. It cost 17,000,000 *livres* ; to have made it navigable for warships would have cost another 6,000,000, a total less than was spent on Versailles.

⁵ "Œuvres," op. cit. i. 157.

⁶ Colbert rode roughshod over existing rights. He even thought it a good thing to inflict losses on municipal creditors on the ground that it would make it difficult for the municipalities to raise further loans.

introduce a new spirit into existing local bodies. Kill and not cure was the word, and in the *intendants* Louis had the best of all lethal weapons.

The first task of Colbert was the adjustment of the finances. Both for the sake of the exchequer and the good of the kingdom this was the most pressing need. From the days of Marie de' Medici to the days of Mazarin the financial administration had been going from bad to worse. But it was not only the dilapidations of ministers and the evil system that had grown up with their connivance that made reform imperative; France had arrived at one of those junctures which occur in every state, when the broadening of the basis of taxation becomes necessary. The old feudal sources had become quite inadequate to meet the needs of the modern state. The expense of government was increasing. Continual wars had drained the exchequer, and seemed likely to recur. War itself was yearly becoming more expensive: armies were getting larger and the feudal levies, no longer of any service, had to be replaced by mercenaries: and mercenaries had to be paid or they would mutiny, as Turenne's troops had mutinied in 1649. Moreover the King contemplated renewed expenditure, and that on an unprecedented scale. His conception of glory involved, not only war in its most extravagant form, but continuous pomp at home, a court of unheard-of splendour, patronage of all the arts, an unchecked succession of fêtes, banquets, *fêes d'artifice*, and building operations on the scale of Versailles. Such a policy could not be cheaply financed with antiquated taxes raised by obsolete methods. Everything, therefore, pointed to the need of a root-and-branch reform in this direction.

The *Chambre de Justice* which had tried Fouquet continued its operations. Its chief work was the revision of the *rentes*. Sully, it will be remembered,¹ had attempted to reduce the *rentes* and had recoiled before the outcry of the *rentiers*. Colbert was more determined; and the *rentes* were reduced wholesale by methods which can only be described as those of bankruptcy. Governments are often ready to carry reforms

¹ *Supra*, p. 115.

at the expense of honesty. They have seldom done so with more callousness than in this instance. In effect Colbert's proposal was to say to the unfortunate *rentiers*, "How much does my master owe you?"—"A hundred measures."—"Take your bill and write four score." It was not good policy to undermine the national credit in such a fashion.

Colbert next turned to see how the revenues of the Crown might be increased. The resources available were the domain, the *gabelle*, the *aides*, and the *traites*. Colbert found the domain which Sully had so carefully fostered in a wretchedly reduced condition, and he set to work to recover, sometimes by unscrupulous means, the domain rights which had been alienated. His success was remarkable, and the revenue of the domain which had dwindled to 80,000 *livres* in 1661 stood at 5,500,000 in 1682. In particular he was a reformer of the forests, regarding them as a great national asset and one on which the future of the navy, which he had greatly at heart, was bound to depend. His forest ordinances illustrate the care he had for the true riches of the kingdom.

Coming to taxation, the most important of the taxes was the *taille*.¹ It will be remembered that Henry IV and Sully had been able to do little to alleviate the injustices in its incidence and collection. The disorders connected with it revolted Colbert and he greatly desired to remedy them. He proposed to do so by making the real *taille* universal; it would have been more just perhaps to have made a modified form of the personal *taille* universal. But any reform in the *taille* would have been invaluable. The forces of disorder, however, were too much for the minister. Local tradition, prejudice, privilege, and the extravagance of his master were arrayed against him, and the abuses of the *taille* were even greater at the close of the reign than at the beginning. Both Vauban and Boisguillebert, serious and well-informed students of economics, draw appalling pictures of the misery consequent on these abuses. Both agree that the misery was not due to the amount of the tax; Boisguillebert asserts² that the *taille*

¹ *Supra*, p. 116.

² In "Économistes financiers du XVIII^e Siècle" (1843), p. 187.

might have been doubled without being an obstacle to prosperity. But the expenses of collection absorbed one-third, and abominable rigours were employed in its enforcement. "Short of fire and sword," says Vauban,¹ "there is no expedient that is not used, and every district in the kingdom is ruined." He had known doors removed from their hinges to meet arrears. And this for the old reason that the *taille* fell on those who were least able to pay it and in a perfectly arbitrary fashion.² With regard to the *gabelle* Colbert does not seem to have thought of a general reform. But he desired to alleviate the position of the *pays de grandes gabelles*, where the price of salt had reached a prohibitive figure. Sully had thought 8 *livres* per *minot* the utmost possible, but in Paris in 1661 it had reached the outrageous figure of 40 *livres*. Colbert tried to buy out the officers of the *pays de grandes gabelles* and merge the administration of the tax in that of the *taille*; unfortunately, however, the traffic in offices was essential to the exchequer and the reform collapsed. Certain minor reforms were accomplished, which were more effective in increasing the yield of the tax³ than in remedying its abuses. Salt, it is true, fell a trifle in price, but the relief was slight, and in many places the price remained prohibitive and the methods used by the tax-farmers intolerably severe. The third source of revenue was the *aides*. They, too, had relapsed since the days of Sully into the old bad system, and were farmed out to companies who used their rights in the most tyrannical fashion. They, too, fell unevenly, some provinces being much more severely treated than others. Colbert sincerely desired to remedy these abuses by unifying the system and enforcing equal *aides* all over the country. But here again local prejudices were too much for him, and in spite of his good intentions the abuses remained practically unchecked.

The paralysing system of *douanes*, which under the name of *traites* hampered the trade of France and fostered an unhealthy diversity between the various regions, "making," to use Vauban's

¹ "Économistes financiers," op. cit. p. 117.

² *Ibid.* 181.

³ From 14,000,000 *livres* in 1661 to 18,000,000 in 1680.

words,¹ "Frenchmen foreigners to other Frenchmen," was of course thoroughly distasteful to Colbert, who was concerned above all things for the commercial and industrial prosperity of the country. That goods sent from the northern regions (where the *cinq grosses fermes*² formed the largest douanial zone) to Spain should be subject to four sets of *douanes* shocked him, and he dreamt of buying up the *traites*. But the cost of such a step was prohibitive, and once again the minister had to be content with minor reforms. An edict of 1664 attempted the simplification of the *traites* within the large area of the *cinq grosses fermes*. But even this small reform was soon a dead letter, and elsewhere the abuses of the *traites* continued unchecked. The *péages* (tolls—many of them illegitimate—levied on goods passing from place to place) were reduced, but the cost of buying up the legitimate tolls was prohibitive. Another grave obstacle to progress was the indebtedness of municipalities. Colbert threatened to repudiate their debts but never carried out his threat.

On the whole it must be admitted that the story of Colbert's financial administration is a cogent witness to the difficulties which confront even the most well-intentioned minister when he has arrayed against him a large vested interest—such as that of the tax farmers—an immense fabric of prejudice, tradition, and local feeling, and is only half-heartedly supported by his master.

Financial reform, however, was no more than an item in the programme of Colbert, whose aim, as has been said, was no less than the creation of a self-sufficing nation. Agriculture

¹ In "Économistes financiers," op. cit. 52.

² The *cinq grosses fermes* had by 1661 been united under one company. This great zone comprised Normandy, Île de France, Maine, Anjou, Poitou, Aunis, Berry, Perche, Nivernais, Burgundy, Bresse, Beaujolais, Touraine, Champagne, Picardy. The whole of this large region was subject to one set of *douanes*. The remainder of France was in two categories: those districts which had been recently acquired and those which had not, but which were still outside the *cinq grosses fermes*. There was a good story of Anne of Austria that she handed the *cinq grosses fermes* to one of her maids of honour, thinking it was an agricultural property.

remained the chief industry of the kingdom and here he found himself a little out of his element. A stranger to agricultural life, he was irritated by the obstinate refusal of crops and seasons to allow themselves to be pigeon-holed; the element of uncertainty annoyed him. Neither he nor his master smelt of the fields as had Sully and his master. Colbert looked at the agricultural problem through fiscal glasses and was always more at his ease amongst artisans than agriculturists. The self-sufficing ideal involved the encouragement of corn-growing. France at that time grew barely enough corn for her own requirements. In years of bad harvest (such as 1661-2) the results were terrible.¹ Louis XIV, speaking of the condition of the country in 1662, describes "une désolation qu'il est difficile d'exprimer". In such a year one can imagine the effects of the internal *douanes* and the restrictions on importation. Louis arranged succours, compelled dealers to sell at "fair prices," bought corn from abroad, and complacently regarded himself as the father of his country.² The purchase of foreign corn was contrary to the ideals of Colbert, who resolved to foster the growth of corn at the expense of other crops. Being as prejudiced against wine as Sully had been against silk, he encouraged the conversion of vineyards into cornfields, not realizing that more corn could be got for the wine by free exchange than could be grown on the land. In other agricultural matters Colbert did much useful work. He continued Henry IV's patronage of the silk industry and founded horse-breeding establishments. The royal stallions were especially successful in Normandy, Poitou, and Berry.

But it was in the encouragement of industries and manufactures that Colbert was really at home. Here he attempted, with a large measure of success, a colossal reform. This was no less than to cut down to their irreducible *minimum* the number of manufactured articles imported into France by

¹ Louis XIV, "Œuvres," op. cit. I. 150, 151. The distress was also very bad in the winter of 1663-4. Colbert allowed free trade as far as he could. The great vice of the internal *douanes* was that, unassured of a market, it did not pay farmers to grow good crops. A good harvest was an actual blow to agriculture.

² *Ibid.* I. 153.

manufacturing everything possible within her borders. He wanted France to hum like a hive with industrious workmen. To give his system a start he offered bounties for the encouragement of new industries, in addition to the *manufactures du roi*, which worked exclusively for the King, and of which the most important was the *Gobelins*. The *Gobelins* works were founded in the fifteenth century by a family of dyers called Gobelin. The business was bought by Colbert for the Crown in 1667, and carried on as a manufactory of furniture and tapestry; there were founded about a hundred *manufactures royales*, such as the linen factory of the Van Robais at Abbeville and the tapestry works at Beauvais. These, although called "royal," worked for the public. The King contributed to the initial expenses and paid the premium of every French apprentice. In return the royal manufactories were expected to establish their respective industries. It is important to remember that Colbert was alive to the dangers of this system of privilege, and intended to abandon it as soon as things had got a start.¹ It was his successor, Louvois, who made permanent a system which had been introduced as a temporary expedient. It cannot, however, be denied that Colbert neglected to encourage small private undertakings, which would have been a surer foundation for national wealth than pampered monopolies. Companies of manufacturers were organized with feverish rapidity and an elaborate system of supervision with many absurd rigours and restrictions was established.² Colbert made the mistake of thinking that every one was as great a glutton for work as himself. His system of

¹ Martin, "La grande industrie," I (1899), ch. ix.

² The industrial administration was as follows:—

(1) The *conseil de commerce* which had existed under Henry IV and Richelieu.

(2) A chamber of commerce at Marseilles.

(3) *Bourses*, i.e. exchanges.

The *intendants* under Louis XIV had a large share in the industrial development of the country and did their work admirably. Martin describes their administration as an "enlightened tutelage rather than a tyranny". In 1669 inspectors of industries were created and put under control of the *intendants*. In the same year Colbert created a special industrial jurisdiction.

supervision was highly unpopular, and it was difficult to impose it on men who had been accustomed to the old free conditions. To fill his industrial hive Colbert required a large and increasing population. Never was statesman more impressed with this necessity than he. Very soon it almost amounted to an obsession. He could not conceal his dislike for monks and nuns and all who stood self-condemned to unproductiveness. He put a money premium on marriage and the production of children, and carried on a continuous crusade against bachelors.¹ This was not all; he was continually trying to attract to France the skilled labourers of other countries. Dutchmen were brought to Rouen, Abbeville, and Carcassonne to found the linen industry; Germans to start foundries; Swedes to develop lead and copper mines, and Italians² to impart their skill in the manufacture of silk and glass.

Finally Colbert surrounded his nursling industries with an impenetrable tariff wall.³ In this he was doing nothing new, only he was doing it under new conditions. High tariffs had been the rule from the time of Philip the Fair to the time of Henry III. Like the system of privilege Colbert imposed them as a temporary expedient, intending to reduce them as soon as the embryo industries had developed; and again Louvois continued as permanent what Colbert had intended

¹ Colbert, "Lettres," op. cit. II. 68. A man marrying before the age of twenty to pay no *taille* till he is twenty-five; one who marries between twenty and twenty-one to pay none till twenty-four. Anyone with ten legitimate living children—*not in religious orders*—to be exempt. A pension of 1000 to 2000 *livres* for gentlemen's wives with over ten of a family.

² See Colbert, "Lettres," II. 484, instructing the French Ambassador to Venice to find out about the manufacture of glass and lace on the quiet. Italy did a great deal for French industry; she sent the craftsmen who taught the French to weave stuffs of silk, gold, and silver (see Martin, "La grande industrie," op. cit.).

³ The tariffs were chiefly directed against Holland and the most important were those of 1664 and 1667. Holland was regarded by Louis XIV, Colbert, and Louvois, as the great trade rival of France, and was made the object of a fierce tariff war which was only abandoned at the Peace of Nimeguen. Raw material was carefully husbanded and the export of wool in particular was forbidden.

to be temporary. It was this continuation of the high tariffs, together with the war-taxes and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, that brought on the disastrous economic crises of Louis' later years.

While building up industries at home Colbert was alive to the importance of foreign trade. France was possessed of a not inconsiderable trade, but it was carried almost entirely in foreign bottoms. She had neither mercantile marine to carry or navy to protect her commerce. Richelieu had given considerable attention to the navy, but Mazarin had neglected it,¹ and thirty or forty crank vessels was all that he left to his successor. The revival of the navy was one of Colbert's most cherished schemes.² He was entrusted in 1669 with the supreme control of marine affairs, and set about his task with admirable energy and intelligence. The rotten old ships that encumbered the ports were replaced by new ones of the latest type. Colbert had considerable knowledge of the detail of naval construction and interested himself deeply in questions of design. At the same time, by dint of attention to the forests, he gradually rendered France independent of outside aid for the materials used in naval construction. Toulon was made into an arsenal and harbour capable of containing fifty or sixty vessels; Rochefort and Brest were conceived and created by Colbert alone; while Dunkirk, after its restoration by the English,³ gave some sort of base in the Channel.⁴ By 1667 France had 116 ships of the line (including 12 seventy-fours), and the number of guns had been increased from 1045 in 1661 to 6460 in 1674. The manning of so large a fleet was a serious matter and Colbert was not content with the old method of impressment. He was not able it is true to dispense with it entirely, but he introduced a system of conscription by which

¹ Professor Lacour-Gayet, in his "La marine militaire de la France sous les règnes de Louis XIII et de Louis XIV" (1911), I. 124, says that the interest Mazarin gave to naval affairs was "never more than secondary and accidental".

² Colbert, "Lettres," op. cit. III. I *sqq.*

³ *Infra*, pp. 232, 233.

⁴ Only an open roadstead; no big ships could get inside; but a splendid refuge for vessels up to 10 feet draught.

he was able to raise the bulk of the crews. The galleys, the arm peculiar to the Mediterranean, were another matter.¹ For work so cruel Colbert regarded slaves as preferable to volunteers; and as many as possible were bought. Vagabonds, deserters, and condemned criminals were also welcomed as recruits. Colbert was quick to see the importance of bringing the navy under the direct control of the Crown. He would have liked the King to interest himself personally, and repeatedly urged him to visit the ports.

Colbert was not a man to spend such time, energy, and money on anything for which he did not see a great future. We may be quite sure that it was a definite part of his policy, as it had been of Richelieu's, that France should be supreme at sea. Louis XIV failed to rise to this ideal as he had failed to rise to the other ideals of his minister. He regarded the sea as a "capricious element" unworthy of the attention of a great monarch and incapable of contributing to his glory. He therefore decided to pursue his goal by land, a decision one of the most momentous that has ever been taken. It killed Colbert, ensured the triumph of England, and condemned France to commercial penury and barren glory. Its effects were felt for generations.

¹ *The Galleys of the Mediterranean.*

These craft retained the methods and appearance of the ships of war of the ancients. Their advantages and disadvantages are obvious. Under favourable conditions they possessed the advantages of steam, could manœuvre without wind, and even on occasion against the wind. Under unfavourable conditions they were, of course, an easy prey to larger craft. They oscillated therefore between the extremes of complete paralysis and extraordinary effectiveness. The condition of the crews of the galleys became a byword. It was almost impossible to get volunteers, and slaves were preferred. The slaves were supplemented, however, and probably outnumbered, by vagabonds and criminals, in fact by all the undesirables of France. Within the narrow compass of the rowing decks were crowded—five to an oar—political and religious prisoners, many of them of gentle birth, with Turkish slaves (bought in the open market at 300 *livres* apiece), prisoners of war, murderers, highwaymen, thieves and vagabonds. By a cruel injustice those who had served their time were not released, but too often remained chained to the thwart for their entire lives or until their constitutions broke down and they became useless. It is curious to read that the life preyed worst upon *faulx saulniers* (smugglers of salt); one wonders why.

Under the protection of the restored navy Colbert hoped to revive commerce and develop colonization, in both of which directions the Dutch had secured an important lead. As a rival to the Dutch East India Company a French Company was created (1660). It was undoubtedly a mistake to make the subscription compulsory. Unceasing quarrels amongst the leaders of the expedition which the Company sent out made matters worse, and astounding blunders were committed. The outbreak of European war was a final blow to the Company, which had secured a foothold in Madagascar, Persia, and India itself. In 1682 its privilege was withdrawn and the trade of the East thrown open. A Levantine Company had little better success. The Dutch War put an end to both enterprises. At the same time, although his plans had failed, Colbert's energy was not without effect on commerce. His mistake had been the disregarding of private enterprise; and it was along the lines of private enterprise that French commerce ultimately developed. When his companies were forgotten the protection afforded to private enterprise by his navy did its work. It was in ways that he had not foreseen that Colbert became one of the founders of commercial France.

It is now time to turn to the narrative of the events of the reign. Louis was fortunate in finding at once opportunities for showing his mettle. It was his fixed belief that the Crown of France was the premier Crown of Europe and his fixed determination to demonstrate the fact on every possible occasion.¹ The opportunity was not long in coming. In October, 1661, a dispute for precedence between the French and Spanish ambassadors in England ended unfavourably to the former, and Louis unhesitatingly demanded reparation. Spain was in no condition to refuse and Louis received the fullest apology, exacting, as he himself says,² "a species of homage from King to King . . . which does not leave even to our enemies room to doubt that our crown is the greatest in Christendom". It was Louis' policy to treat Spain with contempt. With

¹ Cp. Voltaire, "Siècle de Louis XIV," in "Œuvres de Voltaire" (ed. 1877, etc.), xiv. 227.

² "Œuvres," op. cit. i. 132.

England, for whose sovereign he had a genuine regard, he was prepared to deal more gently, and the vexed question of the salute due to the English flag in English waters was settled by compromise. With the Pope he was more harsh. Repeated quarrels between Créquy, the French ambassador, and the Papal Guards led to the withdrawal of the former from Rome. For a moment there was a threat of war; but when the Pope attempted to revive the Holy League Louis agreed to terms (Treaty of Pisa, February, 1664). He insisted, however, on the humiliating and characteristic condition that a pyramid should be erected in Rome recording in a manner favourable to France the events which had led to the treaty. In these matters Louis had struck the keynote of his policy; whatever happened, at whatever cost, the Crown of France should have the precedence in Europe. After these successes he probably really believed in its inherent superiority.

The first active hostilities of the reign were provoked by a Turkish invasion of Austria (1664). As King of France it was Louis' policy to remain neutral; but as a member of the German League he was bound to intervene. The French troops distinguished themselves in the Battle of Saint-Gothard (1 August) and their behaviour encouraged Louis to hope that with their aid he might become the arbiter of Europe. Meanwhile he had enjoyed two further successes. There were two of his neighbours whom he might hope to influence through their pockets; these were Charles of England, who was sadly hampered by the stinginess of his Parliament, and Charles of Lorraine, one of the most avaricious princes of Europe. From the former for a money payment he recovered Dunkirk whose possession by the English had been a cause of ceaseless anxiety; from the latter he obtained the reversion of Lorraine. The Duke had no legitimate children and being, as Louis put it, "one whose natural restlessness made all novelties agreeable to him," was easily persuaded to try the novelty of ceding the reversion of his duchy to France. The recovery of Dunkirk was important. Charles II, it is true, had little use for the place as he had no standing army to speak of; but he might have ceded it to Spain, and its sale to France

was the first evidence that he was willing to connive at the overthrow of Spain and to become the pensioner of France.¹ The cession of Lorraine on the other hand was more imaginary than real; the Duke had in fact no right to cede it; Lorraine was to cost France more than a few million *livres*; nevertheless the transaction gratified the vanity of Louis.

Meanwhile as the royal house of Spain showed increasing signs of failing, the Infant falling ill of "two or three mortal diseases" to which he succumbed on 3 November, 1661,² the question of the rights of Louis' Queen became increasingly important, for Maria Theresa's renunciation was recognized even in Spain as inoperative. The birth of a new Infant (afterwards Charles II) dashed the cup from Louis' lips. In his anxiety that the repudiation should be annulled he offered to ally himself with Spain against England and Portugal, and when Spain declined commenced a diplomatic war on the house of Habsburg, supported Portugal against Spain, and encouraged the match between Charles II of England and the Portuguese Infanta; he also strengthened the League of the Rhine in order to throw an obstacle in the path of the Emperor.

Clearly it was Louis' intention to press his wife's claims by force of arms, and to secure by this means that supremacy in the Spanish Netherlands which had so long been the dominating motive of French policy. A custom of Brabant³ was unearthed by which the female children of a first marriage succeeded to maternal property on the death of their mother. On this ground Maria Theresa, the only surviving child of Philip IV's first marriage, claimed the whole of the Low Countries. The attitude of Holland towards this claim was of vital importance. Holland required the aid of France in the struggle with England which was impending, and in April, 1662, de Witt had concluded a defensive alliance with France. At the same time Holland was no more prepared than she had been in the days

¹ It brought England 5,000,000 *livres* and saved her £120,000 a year. But on the other hand it soon became a great refuge for French privateers and a menace to England's commerce.

² The very day—oddly enough—of the birth of the Dauphin.

³ The idea was Turenne's.

of Mazarin to see France established in the Low Countries, and she viewed the "devolution" claims of Louis with distrust.

War broke out between England and Holland in 1665 and the Dutch immediately claimed the support of France according to their treaty rights. Louis was extremely embarrassed; he did not wish to alienate England and, though enamoured of the idea of war, could not endure that of a naval war. Moreover the fleet was not ready and even Colbert hesitated to commit it to the chances of war. While Louis was procrastinating Philip IV suddenly died (17 September, 1665). His will excluded Maria Theresa from the succession and forbade the alienation of the Low Countries. For a moment Louis deliberated as to whether he should add to a war with England, to which he was by this time committed, a war with Spain. Discretion prevailed; and he contented himself with a half-hearted declaration of war on England (8 January, 1666). And if his declaration of war was courteous the part which Louis took in the hostilities was correspondingly considerate to the feelings of his neighbour. He kept his fleet back and rendered the most meagre assistance to his allies. Very soon, while ostensibly at war with England, he was carrying on negotiations with the English King. Contemplating as he did war with Spain, he was in fact anxious to secure the neutrality of England and agreed to withhold assistance from the Dutch, and even to make concessions in the West Indies, if Charles would agree not to move against France for a year. But the burning of the English fleet in the Medway (June, 1667) forced Charles' hand, and in the following month the Treaty of Breda brought hostilities between Holland and England to a close.

In the previous May Louis had commenced his "trip to Flanders" as he contemptuously called it. Spain had been cleverly isolated, Portugal was still at her throat, and Holland was still the ally of France. It was unfortunate for Louis that this, his first campaign, was such an easy triumph. It justified him in the supposition that war, although certainly a serious affair, was one which could be carried on with deliberation, ceremony, dignity, and even comfort. It was in this campaign that he contracted the habit of carrying with him the whole parapher-

nalía of his Court¹ and developed that passion for sieges which he never lost.² With his immense resources they were uniformly successful and Tournai, Douai, Courtrai, Lille, and Alost quickly capitulated.

France's success created a sensation in Europe and hastened the settlement between Holland and England. Spain also came to terms with Portugal. But Louis by skilful diplomacy drew the craven Emperor to his side, and actually persuaded him to agree to the partition of the Spanish dominions between France and himself in the event of Charles II of Spain dying without heirs (19 January, 1668). This *beau coup* as Louis called it revived the alarm of the Dutch who were determined at all hazards to exclude France from the Netherlands. With a complete revulsion of policy, which shows how grave she thought the crisis, Holland now entered into negotiations with her late antagonist England. The result was The Triple Alliance (23 January, 1668), which united England, Holland, and Sweden in opposition to the encroachments of France. This was a foretaste of the union of the sea-powers against France which was to become the chief factor in European politics.

Louis, who was engaged in the conquest of Franche Comté, was staggered at this new departure in diplomacy. For a moment he thought of throwing himself on Holland; but more prudent counsels prevailed, and on 2 May he accepted, in the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle, the dictation of the Triple Alliance. Not that the terms were unfavourable to France. She gave up Franche Comté, St. Omer, Cambrai, and Aire it is true, but she retained the majority of the captured fortresses, and thus secured her eastern frontier in a way in which it had never previously been secured. Nevertheless Louis by no means accepted the treaty as a settlement. From this moment he had made up his mind to the conquest of Holland. Her

¹ Voltaire speaks of the campaign of 1667 as *le voyage d'un cour*. Comfort and discipline went hand in hand. *Ragouts* and *entremets* were served in the trenches on silver plate (Voltaire, op. cit. xiv. 236).

² "Les grands sièges," he wrote, "me plaisent plus que les autres" ("Œuvres," op. cit. iv. 95).

downfall had been postponed, but the words *delenda est Batavia* had been pronounced.

It should be noted also in connexion with the Peace of Aix la Chapelle that, although the Dutch had had the assistance of the English, Charles II was more than ever anxious for the good-will of Louis and eager to reverse the national policy; it is even probable that the cynical monarch derived pleasure from the thought that the alliance was likely to ruin the Dutch by embroiling them with France. Lastly it may be suggested that the peace betrayed the weakness of Louis' character. He was no fire-eater; not that he was a coward but he had not, nor had he any ambition to have, any of the élan or joy of battle of Henry IV or the stubborn fighting qualities of his father. "Brutal valour which merely despised life" he held in contempt,¹ and, though for the sake of effect he thought it necessary to expose his royal person ostentatiously to the risks of war, the dust of combat seemed to him indecorous and the risk deplorable. Campaigns had to be reduced to mathematical certainties and gone about in circumspect and deliberate fashion.² Thus it was that he failed as a commander. He was never ready to take the chances offered by changing circumstances, and thus it was now that he was unwilling to fling himself upon Holland at the most favourable moment. When he signed the Peace of Aix Louis condemned himself to failure in his struggle with the Dutch. From that moment Holland was the enemy, and if she was not to be crushed at once it was only that she might be destroyed by methods more deliberate and more sure. The

¹ "Œuvres," op. cit. II. 426.

As Voltaire says (op. cit. XIV. 240): "He did not seek dangers, but contented himself with not fearing them and with engaging others to throw themselves into danger for him with ardour".

² "On ne sauroit trop prendre de précautions pour réussir dans les desseins où il y a de la gloire et de la réputation. Quand on a ces deux objets devant les yeux on ne sent ni fatigues ni peures . . . il faut même aller plus loin pour se mettre à couvert des accidents imprévus" ("Œuvres," op. cit. IV. 152, 153).

Voltaire's remark is a true one: "Louis wished for a glory that was certain, and in not wishing to purchase it by indefatigable labour he lost it" ("Œuvres," op. cit. XIV. 260).

preparations for her destruction occupied four years and in the end she was not destroyed. A little dash at the moment when he heard of the Triple Alliance might have brought a more successful issue in a few months.

The years 1668-1672 were busy ones for the King and his agents. Colbert was developing his tariff policy and strengthening the finances ; the army and navy were growing apace ; and the diplomatists were engaged in undermining the Triple Alliance. This task was less difficult than it seemed ; for there was little homogeneity among the parties to that Treaty. Sweden in particular was the natural ally and not the enemy of France. But it was with the King of England that the diplomatists were chiefly concerned, with the result that on 1 June, 1670, Charles put his name to the secret Treaty of Dover, by which he agreed to throw over not only the Dutch but his own subjects also, to join Louis on the declaration of war, and eventually to support his claims on the Spanish dominions. In return he was to receive financial assistance, and at the close of hostilities compensation at the mouth of the Scheldt and in Walcheren, to which would of course be added the command of the sea. A bogus treaty was produced to deceive the English ministry. A similar negotiation with Sweden was also completed, a secret treaty being signed on 6 May, 1672. Treaties were also made with a number of the smaller German States, and a base thereby provided for military operations against the United Provinces.¹

The most important matter, however, that occupied the attention of Louis and his advisers during these years was necessarily the development of the army. In 1667 Louis had been able to put into the field no more than 72,000 men ; in 1672 he commanded the unprecedented number of 120,000, and in 1678 no less than 279,000. And it was not only in numbers that the army was improved, its whole organization and every detail of the service was revised and strengthened

¹ "I have made treaties," said the King (*Œuvres*, III. 130), "with England, Cologne, Münster, to attack Holland ; with Sweden to hold Germany in check ; with Hanover, Neuburg, and the Emperor to observe neutrality."

by the King himself, aided by le Tellier and his more famous son Louvois. It was less a root-and-branch reform than a continual rubbing off of corners until the machine, although still in part obsolete, ran with admirable smoothness. The army in fact was reformed not by geniuses but by professional students of detail. Under the new, or rather the improved, regime the army was recruited from the old sources in the old manner. But an attempt to revive the *arrière-ban* in 1674 produced such an extraordinary rabble that it had to be abandoned. Towards the close of the period a militia *ordonnance* was passed which produced a national reserve of 25,000 men; but after the death of Louvois the militia declined. The real military resource was voluntary enlistment encouraged by occasional impressment. It is good proof of the fighting spirit of the French that even the enormous armies of Louis XIV were in the main voluntary.¹ Large numbers of recruits were also raised in foreign countries. Regular pay was given—all the more welcome after the Mazarin regime; and severe discipline was imposed. Discipline indeed was a quality that appealed strongly to Louis and he insisted on its rigid enforcement. The long reign witnessed a revolution in military weapons. The cumbersome but trustworthy matchlock gave way to the flintlock with its much more rapid fire.² But the great change was in artillery and engineering. In an age of sieges it was natural that artillery should come to the front. Louvois organized it as a distinct branch of the service. Engineering

¹ It is also proof of the misery of the country that so many sought employment in the army.

² The musket, which had not really been a very great improvement on the arquebus, had been undergoing considerable alterations. Gustavus had armed his soldiers with a light musket which enabled them to dispense with the fork support. In the middle of the century the flintlock, with its much more rapid fire, was invented. But Louis and Louvois disliked new inventions. The new weapon was tried on a small scale in 1671 and in 1688 Vauban introduced bayonets *à douille* (i.e. stuffed into the muzzle of the rifle) in place of pikes. It was at Steinkirk that the French threw away their pikes and seized the firearms of their enemies. After that Louis overcame his prejudices and in the War of the Spanish Succession the French army was fully equipped with rifle and bayonet. See Thoumas, "Les transformations de l'Armée Française," op. cit. II. 93.

and fortifications were similarly organized by Vauban, probably the greatest genius in this branch of war that the world has ever seen. Vauban revolutionized the art of fortification. From being shambles the trenches became "places of security where one was as if *chez soi*". He surrounded France with his wonderful fortresses at all her vulnerable points, and it came to be said with truth "ville assiégée par Vauban ville prise; ville défendue par Vauban ville imprenable". Genius of this kind—methodical, mathematical, orderly, and which took no risks—delighted Louis, who regarded the avoidance of accidents as the chief duty of a commander.¹ Nevertheless he was ungenerous to Vauban and took to himself the credit of his genius. "Vauban suggested the very plan that occurred to me," he was always saying. Mediocrity in command cannot be just to genius.

The methodical minuteness of the reformers was most effective in the sphere of commissariat. Louis was alive to the fact that an army moves on its stomach, and his careful organization of this department eventually enabled the French to undertake campaigns and marches which were impossible to other European armies.² But it also made them dreadfully dependent on their magazines and took the life and enterprise out of them. The French soldier lost the art of shifting for himself: he did not recover it until the Revolution. Nevertheless, the military reforms, however incomplete, raised France to a military position which provoked the wonder of Europe.

In the spring of 1672 Louis struck; and with his immense and well-disciplined armies and methodical generalship, and aided as he was by Turenne and Condé, he was soon over the Rhine (12 June), and master of Overijssel, Drenthe, Guelders, and Utrecht. He drew up long lists of the places he captured, collecting fortresses as a philatelist collects stamps. By June Amsterdam was threatened and an attack by the allied fleets of France and England would have completed the discomfiture

¹ "Œuvres," op. cit. III. 454.

² See Rousset, "Histoire de Louvois" (1862-1863), I. 249, and Louis XIV, "Œuvres," op. cit. IV. 67.

of the Dutch. Such an attack was intended, but was frustrated by the Dutch Admiral de Ruyter who fell unexpectedly on the allied fleets in Southwold Bay, and with slightly inferior forces handled them so roughly that all their plans were upset (7 June). The descent on the coast of Holland had to be abandoned.¹ By land, however, the Dutch were so hard pressed that they were driven to their last resource—that of opening the sluices and cutting the dykes; Amsterdam became an island and Holland was saved. De Witt meanwhile had opened negotiations offering France the “Generality States”² and an indemnity to cover the cost of the war. Louis rejected the terms with scorn; he was afterwards obliged to accept terms far less favourable. Already William of Orange, his lifelong rival, was Stadtholder of two of the Dutch States and Captain and Admiral-General of the Republic. An Orange restoration was assured, nay practically accomplished. On 20 August, 1672, the brothers de Witt were murdered by the populace.

While this revolution was in progress Louis had been wasting valuable time in sieges and ceremonious campaigns.³ Once more lack of dash was his undoing. Had he pushed on at all hazards in June and July he would have caught the enemy in the throes of revolution. The crisis over, things were different. William quickly showed his iron determination. He put the defences in proper order, gathered a considerable army, and began to carry war into the enemy's country. The French were held behind the line of fortresses between the Scheldt and the Zuyder Zee. Their allies were repulsed from Groningen and a dashing attempt by William himself to cut the French lines had a great moral effect.

¹ People at home had been very nervous about affairs at sea. Madame de Sévigné wrote on 13 May, 1672 (“Lettres,” op. cit. III. 96): “On craint que Ruyter, qui est le plus grand capitaine de la mer, n’ait combattu et battu le Comte d’Estrées dans la Manche. On sait que le Roi ne veut pas qu’on en écrive: il faut espérer qu’il ne nous cachera pas ses victoires!”

² i.e. that part of Brabant which had been ceded to the Dutch in 1648.

³ Yet every one was delighted with the success of the royal arms because in eight days they took six towns (see Madame de Sévigné, op. cit. III. 139).

The lesson of the campaign of 1672 was that a nation in arms fighting for existence, aided by nature, secure of the command of the sea, and led by a man of William's stern character might count on beating back all but the most impetuous attacks.

But although her attacks were not impetuous France, with Turenne and Condé still in the fighting line, was not an enemy to be despised. Turenne penetrated into Westphalia in the depth of winter by one of his most remarkable marches and forced Brandenburg, the most valuable of the allies of the Dutch, to accept terms (Treaty of Vossem, April, 1673). It would have been well for Louis if he could have so far curbed his vanity as to raise Turenne to the chief command; but he was determined that all the glory should be his own. He commenced the new campaign in the most overweening spirit. "Send me a painter," he said, "there will be something worth painting." On this occasion he had selected Maestricht as the background of the picture of which he was to be the subject. Vauban, on whose genius the success of the operations depended, hardly found a place on the canvas. The city fell on 1 July. While Louis was striking attitudes before Maestricht more serious business was afoot elsewhere. In two battles (7 and 14 June) off Schooneveldt, and a third (21 August) off Texel, de Ruyter with greatly inferior forces reasserted the superiority of the Dutch fleet. In all these naval actions the French fleet had behaved equivocally, and there is more than a suspicion that the commanders had received instructions not to risk their ships. If this was so it was sheer madness; for it was her victories at sea, which might perhaps have been turned into defeats if the French fleet had co-operated wholeheartedly with the English, that enabled Holland to emerge successfully from the war. William took Naarden in September and Bonn in November and the French were obliged to evacuate Holland. On 15 October Spain declared war. Thus the whole French plan of campaign was shivered to pieces. Yet Louis wrote at the close of the year: "I finished this year reproaching myself with nothing, and in the belief that I had neglected no opportunity of preserving and extend-

ing the boundaries of my kingdom".¹ A less biassed critic thought otherwise. Madame de Sévigné wrote that "if they had not provision of old laurels those of this year would not cover them".

Europe was by this time profoundly disturbed at the conduct of Louis XIV, and William took advantage of this feeling to effect, in 1674, a complete reversal of European politics. He bound Austria, Spain, Brunswick, and Brandenburg into a coalition against France; but his chief triumph was an alliance with England (Treaty of Westminster, February, 1674). Louis was not a little alarmed; even in his *Memoirs* he acknowledges that "the beginning of 1674 was not so tranquil as the preceding year," and that "most of the princes of Europe had leagued themselves against me".² In truth the King's military *longueurs* had wrought irreparable mischief. They had given Lionne's delicate system of alliances, which had never had the elements of permanence, time to break down. But Louis had still his great armies and his great commanders, and if 1674 was ruinous to French diplomacy it was not inglorious to French arms. Once more, accompanied by Vauban, Louis set out on his round of sieges, this time in Franche Comté, while Condé occupied the Dutch in Holland, fighting with William on 11 August, the bloody and doubtful battle of Seneffe. Meanwhile Turenne was covering his master's operations by a campaign on the Rhine. This was perhaps the most wonderful of all his campaigns; he defeated the imperialists at Sinsheim on 16 June and proceeded to lay waste the Palatinate. After a second victory at Ensheim he retired to winter quarters, only to emerge when his opponents were napping and—contrary to the instructions of Louis and Louvois—to conquer Alsace in the depth of winter, winding up with the total defeat of the Great Elector at Colmar (5 January, 1675). These campaigns of Turenne deserve more than passing mention; he excelled himself in feats of marching. In crossing the *Col de la petite pierre* in winter he divided his army into several columns following different roads and reaching Belfort simultaneously; in twenty-two days he made 200

¹ "Œuvres," op. cit. III. 403.

² *Ibid.* op. cit. IV. 453.

kilometres, but with great *détours* in the snow and in fearful weather. The march from near Saverne to Sinsheim via Philippsburg was also a remarkable performance.¹ But while pressing home these successes Turenne met with his death (26 July). His loss was most serious to France and was recognized as such. "Voilà M. de Turenne tué," writes Madame de Sévigné, "voilà une consternation générale ! voilà M. le Prince (Condé) qui court en Allemagne ! voilà la France desolée !" ² Condé managed to preserve Alsace but the tide of success was turned.

In the following year (1676) Louis enjoyed a series of successful sieges in Flanders, adding Condé, Valenciennes, Bouchain, Cambrai, and Saint-Omer to his collection. It was after this that he had the temerity to write : "Je sais embarrasser mes ennemis par ma seule présence ; car je sais qu'ils ne souhaitent rien avec tant d'ardeur que mon retour en France".³ But it was in a side issue and upon that despised element the sea that France vindicated in 1676 her real fighting capacity. Unhampered by the paralysing presence of royalty and led by an old sea-wolf—du Quesne—the French fleet, which under the care of Colbert and Seignelay had been yearly increasing in strength and efficiency, fought an undecided battle with the Dutch under de Ruyter off Stromboli (7 January, 1676). The Sicilians had revolted against Spain and had sought the assistance of France. Spain had appealed to Holland and de Ruyter had been dispatched to the Mediterranean. A second action was fought on 22 April off Agosta in which de Ruyter lost his life. His death was a set-off to that of Turenne. France gained a further success on 2 June off Palermo, after which, to use Madame de Sévigné's expression, the Mediterranean became as tranquil as a lake. These naval triumphs were a glorious testimony to the energy and forethought of

¹ Thoumas, op. cit. II. 336 ; and Feuquierès, "Mémoires." II, ch. LIV. pp. 187, 188.

² "Lettres," op. cit. IV. i. 63.

³ "Œuvres," op. cit. IV. 84. In fairness to Louis it should be remembered that the strategic mobility and striking power of armies was far lower than it was a hundred years later, and that the local fortress was proportionately more important.

Colbert ; in a very few years he had built up a navy fit to cope with the best navies of the world. If it were only for this he deserves the gratitude of France ; and if Louis could only have been made to see that a few victories such as those of du Quesne were worth all the barren glories of his campaigns, he might have been able to face the combination of the sea-powers against France, indeed France might have herself become the greatest of the sea-powers.

Meanwhile a congress had met at Nimeguen in the hope of arranging peace under the mediation of Charles II. Both Holland and France were willing to bury their own particular hatchets, but neither could desert her allies. William of Orange, to whom peace seemed to mean extinction, naturally desired to prolong hostilities. In 1677 Louis captured Valenciennes and Monsieur (the King's eldest brother, Philip, Duke of Orleans) defeated William in the pitched battle of Cassel (11 April).¹ Saint-Omer and Cambrai fell in May and in the autumn Créquy, after a brilliant campaign on the Rhine, captured Freiburg. Grave news from England interrupted the campaigns. Charles' treacherous diplomacy had by this time completely broken down and with a flash of genius he had swung round to the idea of an alliance with the House of Orange and had decided to offer his niece, Mary, in marriage to William. The hope was that this Stuart-Orange combination would be able to impose terms on France which England alone could not impose. The marriage of William and Mary took place in November ; in the following January (1678) an alliance between the sea-powers was signed. Louis immediately evacuated Sicily, thereby abandoning the fruits of du Quesne's victories, and proceeded to strike at the alliance in the Low Countries. On 12 March French troops were in Ghent, and Antwerp itself was threatened.² Having

¹ Louis XIV, "Œuvres," op. cit. iv. 116, 117.

² It was at this juncture that Louis wrote : " J'avoue que je sentois quelque plaisir . . . pour avoir déjà fait ce qui paroissoit possible d'assiéger des places que les plus grands capitaines de notre siècle n'avoient osé regarder, ou devant lesquelles ils avoient été malheureux " (*ibid.* iv. 145).

demonstrated what he could do, he proceeded to lay down his terms. He demanded the cession of Franche Comté and of a number of the captured Flemish towns. Freiburg was to be exchanged for Philippsburg and Nancy for Toul. Lorraine was to revert to its duke but with right of passage for French troops. Maestricht was to be returned to Holland and a commercial treaty signed. France's allies were to receive back all conquered territory. The striking thing in the offer is its extraordinary leniency to Holland. Louis, in fact, was greatly alarmed at the combination of the sea-powers. Charles, indeed, might be won back, but Louis was beginning to realize that the English nation had found Charles out, and that consequently his signature for the future would only bind himself and not his people. On 10 August, 1678, therefore, peace was signed between France and Holland. France surrendered Maestricht and granted a commercial treaty which undermined the whole commercial policy of Colbert. William of Orange showed his dislike for the peace by giving battle to Luxembourg under the walls of Mons four days before its signature. The battle of Saint-Denys was bloody and indecisive.

In September peace was made with Spain and it is curious to find that she, who was only a subordinate in the war, was the chief sufferer by the settlement that concluded it. She was in fact hated both by her enemy and her ally. At her expense France became mistress of Franche Comté and again at her expense received a long line of fortresses for the protection of her north-eastern frontier. The Emperor was the next to come to terms. The exchange of Freiburg for Philippsburg was completed. Lorraine, on its Duke's refusal to receive it back in a mutilated condition, remained in the occupation of France. The Emperor abandoned his ally Brandenburg and made peace with Sweden. Frederick William held out obstinately and it even required further hostilities to bring him to terms. In the end he was obliged to restore Pomerania to Sweden and to ally himself with the King of France. The adhesion of Denmark closed this important series of treaties known collectively as the Treaties of Nimeguen.

Although it had failed in its ostensible object, the war had placed Louis on to a pinnacle of greatness. Over all his enemies, with the solitary exception of the Dutch, he had recorded a memorable triumph. He had dictated his own terms and could claim to be the arbiter of Europe. The whole world applauded ; he was acclaimed on all sides as *Louis le Grand* and hailed as the *Roi Soleil*. Nevertheless he was neither satisfied nor altogether easy in his mind. The fact that Holland remained intact after he had carried the war in person over her frontiers rankled in his bosom. Holland indeed had not lost an atom of territory and France had been obliged to restore in Flanders a line of barrier fortresses which secured her against future attack. Louis showed his resentment by dismissing Pomponne, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and appointing Colbert's brother to the post.

France was worn out by the drain of war and Louis was anxious to secure for her a period of recuperation. He had therefore to proceed by way of diplomacy. His immediate ambition was to improve his position in the Empire with a view to a candidature for the imperial throne at the next vacancy. He also desired to establish himself on the Rhine, to cut off the Spanish Netherlands from Austria, and to secure for himself the approach to Holland from that quarter. On what support could he rely ? In England his friend Charles was embroiling himself more deeply every day with Parliament and nation. The English Revolution might almost be said to have begun. And, Charles apart, England was against France. In Holland there was always a peace-party—the bourgeois—who, satisfied with the tariff concessions of Nimeguen, desired peace in order to make the most of them. Towards this party Louis made advances. Between him and William there could be no peace. Each felt the impulse of contrasted character and antagonistic missions. With one power—Brandenburg—Louis entered into closer relations. The great Elector was no German patriot and saw how he had been duped into the cession of Pomerania ; moreover he was full of schemes for the consolidation of Germany round his dynasty. If France was to be the arbiter of Europe, Brandenburg must side with France. Freder-

ick William therefore signed a Treaty (25 October, 1679) by which in return for subsidies he became the satellite of Louis. Saxony, Bavaria, and Cologne also drew towards France; so that for the time being the Empire was disarmed. It only remained to be seen how far Louis could go without alienating his German friends: and events proved that he could go a long way.

Anxious to avoid a general war, Louis conceived an ingenious plan for reaping the advantages of war without actually declaring it. He set up in various cities—Metz, Besançon, Breisach, and Tournai—what were called *chambres de réunion*, which, by putting their own interpretation on the various treaties, were to hand over to France towns over which she had indefinite rights and which Louis required for the prosecution of his designs. The power of France in Alsace which had, it will be remembered, been left in a somewhat ill-defined condition by the Peace of Westphalia was in this way consolidated, and France became mistress of the entire district with the single but important exception of Strassburg. That city refused to undergo the process of *réunion*. In the autumn of 1681 French troops were therefore advanced to the Rhine and Strassburg was seized. The magistrates wrote a piteous letter to the Emperor declaring that they were “too feeble to resist a power so great and terrible as that of the Most Christian King” and must perforce accept his terms. Louis proceeded in person to Strassburg, made a triumphal entry into the city, and re-established the Bishop (October, 1681). In the same autumn the Duke of Mantua was forced to surrender Casale to France. Thus two priceless fortresses were acquired without a blow having been struck. Luxemburg seemed likely to be the next victim. But European feeling was becoming aroused by Louis’ aggressions. This is not astonishing: what is astonishing is that Europe should have looked on while France was calmly plucking the choicest fruit from the branches. In June, 1680, there had been an alliance between Spain and England to which Louis replied in January, 1681, by confirming his *liaison* with Brandenburg and renewing his intrigues with the King of England. Sweden

was the next power to take alarm. She had claims on Deux Ponts which was threatened with *réunion*, and to prevent this entered into alliance with Holland to guarantee the terms of Nimeguen (30 September, 1681). Brandenburg—ever nursing her grudge against Sweden—drew yet closer to France (22 January, 1682) and in March Denmark chimed in. Against this combination a Quadruple Alliance (Holland, Sweden, the Emperor, and Spain) was formed.

Fortunately for France—perhaps even not without her assistance—a diversion now occurred which took the wind out of the sails of this alliance. Hungary which had long been in revolt against the Emperor began to receive aid from Turkey, and in July, 1683, a Turkish army threatened Vienna. Christendom ought to have leapt to Leopold's side, and the first to do so should have been the "Most Christian King". The Pope sent a nuncio to urge him to this course. But Louis saw in the peril of Austria only the opportunity for consolidating the *réunions*. Much to his chagrin Christendom found a saviour in Sobieski who, with a Polish army, drove the Turks out of Austrian territory (September, 1683). Louis' hand was forced and he sent an ultimatum to Spain. In October that power declared war: but fearing the intervention of the emancipated Leopold, or worse still of Holland, Louis quickly offered a number of alternative terms to Spain. Courtrai and Dixmuiden were taken and the lands of Bruges and Brussels ravaged, Oudenarde was bombarded, and finally (4 June, 1684) Luxemburg was taken.

Seeing that no help was forthcoming Spain made peace with what grace she could. The Peace or Truce of Ratisbon was two-fold, between the Emperor and France and between Spain and France. A truce of twenty years was to be observed, during which period France was to retain Strassburg and Kehl (its *tête-du-pont*, on the right bank) and all the places in the Empire occupied before August, 1681 (i.e. the bulk of the *réunions*). In addition she received for the term of the truce Luxemburg, Beaumont, Bouvines, and Chimay. It reads like a fairy story: Louis had hardly struck a blow; he was surrounded by a jealous and hostile Europe; yet he had

practically dictated terms and had calmly appropriated some of the most important fortresses in Europe. It is high testimony to his cunning and his prestige, and also to the demoralization of the other powers. The truth was that the union of the sea-powers remained impossible so long as a Stuart occupied the throne of England, and that until that union was accomplished there was no combination that could cope with France. Pending the union of those powers Louis could dictate terms as he did at Ratisbon, and could mount higher and higher up the dizzy ladder of glory.

NOTE.—For Authorities see pp. 288 and 289.

CHAPTER XXV

LOUIS XIV

(PART II)

(1684-1715)

THE years 1683 to 1685 mark an epoch. Louis XIV was passing the meridian. By 1685 he had even passed it. The splendours of the later years of his reign are the splendours of the setting sun. The actual events which mark the transition are the death of Colbert (6 September, 1683), which closes the epoch of grand ideals in high places; the marriage of Louis to Madame de Maintenon (date uncertain, probably January, 1684), which effected his "conversion" and gave a permanent set to his internal and especially his religious policy; the Truce of Ratisbon, which registered the high-water mark of his success in foreign policy, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), which set a seal on that unimaginative rigidity which was Louis' undoing. In the period 1661 to 1685 his apparent success had been phenomenal. Any Frenchman who had lived in the period of the *Frondes* and in the period of Louis' earlier personal rule must have been aware of it. Everywhere there was movement and change; and the sense of an active and personal government pervaded the land. Commerce had been created by Colbert and the towns hummed with commercial activity: public works were developing the resources of the country: canals, roads, bridges were spreading their beneficent influence:¹ the sea was opened to a newly created mercantile marine protected by a newly created navy. The

¹ This beneficent influence, however, had not got so far as the repair of the famous Pont Saint-Bénézet, at Avignon, as Madame de Sévigné's daughter, Madame de Grignan, knew to her cost. She was all but drowned in ferrying over the Rhône at Avignon.

trading and colonizing companies had not yet proved a failure. An immense administrative activity, of which the *intendants* were the instruments, permeated the entire country. The Court shone with a dazzling splendour, housed as it was in immense new palaces of unheard-of size and luxury. Le Nôtre laid out the magnificent gardens, Lulli provided the music, and the overlapping of Molière and Racine afforded a wealth of dramatic art. Bossuet was preaching, Mignard painting, and Pascal, La Rochefoucault, Mme. de Sévigné, and Lafontaine were producing their immortal works. Bruant and the Mansards, uncle and nephew, were building. Paris assumed a new aspect; Versailles grew up beside her; the genius of Colbert was creating naval bases, and that of Vauban was surrounding France with a girdle of impregnable fortresses. The army, reformed, enlarged, and disciplined, seemed to hold Europe at arm's length. Amidst all this whirl of change sat the author of it all, the deity of the new era, complacently surveying his own handiwork, and finding it very good.¹

Such was the outside of the platter: let us turn to the inside. What was there in all this to give an ominous suggestion that the downward grade had been reached, the meridian passed? In the first place there was the King's character. It had not perhaps degenerated; but all the worst points in it had become emphasized, fostered by his unbridled vanity, the unchecked absolutism which he enjoyed, and the adulation which poured in from all sides. The Louis of the later years is infinitely lower than the Louis of 1661. Secondly—disguise it how he would—there was no denying that the campaigns had been a comparative failure. True, Louis had seemed to dictate terms in the Truce of Ratisbon: but the Truce of Ratisbon had not even the form of a permanent settlement and he had not secured the object for which he had fought; moreover the measure of success which he had attained was clearly due more to the disunity and

¹ Louis would have been the last to disown the force of the comparison. in one passage in his *Mémoires* he actually says: "Sometimes, occupying as we do in a sense the place of God, we seem to participate in his knowledge" ("Œuvres," op. cit. II. 283).

disorganization of his opponents than to his military feats. The French armies indeed, by their size, their organization, and their discipline, had evoked the admiration of Europe. But they had not been led in the spirit which conquers worlds. It was in the later wars, when Louis' blighting influence was removed and scope was given to the genius of Luxembourg and the capacity of Villars, that these armies proved their real worth. Nothing indeed is more remarkable than the "staying power" of the French armies. Defeated time after time, they were yet able in the closing rounds of the Spanish Succession War to snatch victories which saved the kingdom from humiliation. All this, however, was still in the future. Up to this date French arms had not done themselves justice. At the Truce of Ratisbon the military outlook was by no means encouraging for France.

More sinister even than this was the ill-concealed prostration of the kingdom. Reform had failed: in spite of Colbert's exertions the finances remained in the old bad groove. All that could be done with the old weapons had been done; time after time Colbert had warned his master that, do what he might to increase receipts, it was all to no purpose if expenses increased at a rate many times greater. The future was "eaten" to provide for the present, and every year the financial prospect became darker. Even before the great minister's death (1683) an annual deficit had become a matter of course: in that year it amounted to 16,000,000 *livres*. After Colbert's death it increased by leaps and bounds: in 1697 it amounted to 138,000,000, in 1706 to 143,000,000.¹ Finally there was the jarring religious note in the symphony of unity and order. Louis was not by nature intolerant; but he was impatient of anything that tended to disunion or independence; and he was ready if necessary to become, as he did become, the drill-sergeant of the creeds. This craze for absolute unity within the body politic is not uncommon: but without exception it has proved to be petrifying to the life of the State which adopts it. No State can aim at a higher

¹ The expenditure between 1670 and 1679 rose from 77,000,000 to 128,000,000 *livres*.

degree of internal unity than that of "many members of the self-same body". Louis is not the only ruler who has mistaken the form of unity for the spirit; but he did so with consequences more disastrous than usual. The Edict of Nantes was revoked on 22 October, 1685, and it is necessary that we should turn back for a moment and trace the steps which led to this most important event.

Catholicism in France was so inextricably bound up with the Crown that it needed the most careful steering to prevent a crisis in which the loyalty of the Church of France to the Crown might be pitted against her loyalty to the Pope. The situation was one which did not admit of logical definition but which demanded continual compromise. The first attempt to define it brought the inevitable catastrophe. In 1673 the King issued an edict defining the rights of the Crown in the matter of the *Régale*.¹ The opposition to this edict came from the Jansenists, while the Jesuits supported the Crown. The opponents of the edict appealed to Rome, and Innocent XI took a very strong line: so that by a curious turn of the wheel the Jansenists found themselves for the moment under the special protection of the Holy See. The orthodox clergy of the kingdom ranged themselves beside the King, and there was every prospect of a rupture with Rome. On 19 March, 1682, a declaration of four articles was passed by the Assembly of the Clergy of France, which reasserted the supremacy of the King, hinted at the superiority of Councils to the Pope, and (very guardedly) called in question the papal infallibility. The Pope pronounced these articles null and void: and the Assembly of the French Clergy recorded its protest against his action. And then gradually the whole affair of the *Régale* was allowed to lapse. The Assembly was prorogued and not recalled; the French bishops professed to the Pope their "inexpressible grief," and the four Gallican propositions were renounced (1693). Louis had been sensible enough to see that the attempt to define the indefinable must end in disaster. Moreover if he desired royal supremacy he certainly did not

¹ *Supra*, I. 109, 145 notes.

desire schism, and it was to schism that the proceedings of the Assembly pointed.

The cessation of the Gallican controversy was the signal for a recrudescence of the Jansenist controversy. That heresy—for so it was regarded—had fallen on evil days, and its ranks had been reduced by the bulls of Alexander VII (1656). The death of Mère Angélique (6 August, 1661) removed its great spiritual force, and its spiritual aims and ideals were soon lost in a bog of technicalities. Should the Jansenists sign the declaration condemning the doctrines of their founder? Instead of taking a firm stand on principles, they began to dispute as to what the declaration really meant, what Jansenius had really meant, what Saint Augustine had really meant. Pascal, it is true, after long hesitation, denounced this hyper-subtlety as unworthy: but he died in 1662. Port-Royal resisted and its inmates were exiled;¹ and Pavillon, the Jansenist Bishop of Alet, “spat (metaphorically) in the King’s face”. The King sent to the Pope for a further pronouncement which should leave no room for dispute as to what was meant. Alexander VII sent a fresh formula, defining the declaration in which Jansenism had been condemned in February, 1665. Four bishops alone continued to resist; but others—many from Gallicanism as much as from Jansenism—took up their cause and denied the infallibility of the Pope in “matters of fact”. It is curious to see the very King who was soon to be calling in question the supremacy of the Pope encouraging the Pope to exercise that supremacy in his favour. Here in the quarrel with the Jansenists, and the necessity for papal aid therein, is the solution of the puzzle why Louis drew back in his quarrel with the Pope. But he drew back also in his quarrel with the Jansenists. The two policies reacted the one upon the other: to attack the Jansenists would encourage the Pope; to attack the Pope would encourage the Jansenists. In 1668 a Peace of the Church was arranged, and like the question of the *Régale* the question of the Jansenists was hung up for treatment in the future.

So Jansenism remained a blot on the unity of the Church.

¹ Port-Royal itself was destroyed in 1708.

In so far as it assumed the airs of martyrdom, as it did at Port-Royal, it was a pious anachronism, and the grim and meticulous piety of its more ardent disciples was out of date in the reign of Louis XIV; where, as more often, it degenerated into haggling dialectics and hair-splitting arguments, it was merely tiresome and lost cogency by litigiousness. So much for the Jansenist heresy. With the Protestant heresy, guaranteed though it was by the Edict of Nantes, sterner measures were taken. It would have been well for the nation if Louis had been willing to hang up that question along with the others. But it was threshed out to its conclusion. In this matter the nation must share the blame with the King. Louis had hoped to kill Protestantism, not by kindness, but by strict justice and careful observance of the terms granted by Henry IV. But if this was the King's instinct it was not that of the nation. Public opinion demanded the extirpation of Protestantism; and in the final stages, at any rate, the King's hand was forced by the clergy and the more ardent Catholic party while the nation stood by applauding. Universally condemned by posterity, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was as universally acclaimed by contemporary opinion. It is one more proof of the long-sightedness of Henry IV that the revocation of his legislation should have been greeted nearly a hundred years later as a reform, only to be condemned by an even later posterity as retrograde.¹

The interference with the restricted liberties of the Protestants was a very wanton proceeding. They had long ceased to be a faction, and had, since the religious struggles, served the state with acknowledged loyalty: Turenne himself was a Protestant until 1668, when Bossuet converted him. But religious animosity dies notoriously hard, and in this case it was increased by the social cleavage between the Protestants and the Catholics. Speaking generally the strength of the former was in the prosperous middle class; the ever un-

¹ The comment of that good Catholic Madame de Sévigné on the Revocation ("Lettres," op. cit. VIII. 245): "Vous auriez vu, sans doute, l'édit par lequel le Roi révoque celui de Nantes. Rien n'est si beau que tout ce qu'il contient, et jamais aucun Roi ne fait et ne fera rien de plus mémorable."

popular *nouveaux riches*. Social jealousy was an unworthy but a potent cause of the attack on Protestantism. But another reason as potent, if not more so, was the persistence of the idea of political unity. It is an idea which has ever commended itself to France and which commended itself with especial force to Louis XIV and the men of his time. To the bulk of Frenchmen the Protestants, who probably numbered over a million, were an obstinate and opinionated sect who, by cherishing their prejudices, had made themselves a blot on the fair unity of the kingdom and the Church.

From the beginning of Louis' personal rule the Edict of Nantes was administered with the utmost rigidity, and many means of harassing the Protestants were found without the necessity for overstepping the bounds which it laid down. In 1665 the General Assembly of the Clergy proposed a further limitation of the freedom of the Protestants, and in 1666 the actual era of persecution began. But as long as the wars continued the end was postponed. After 1679, which may be regarded as the moment of the King's "conversion," the final extirpation of heresy began. All the faithful threw themselves with energy into the glorious work of "converting" the heretics. Protestants were excluded from all offices; rigour after rigour and limitation after limitation was imposed upon them. Their temples were closed and their schools abolished. Every opportunity was taken to "convert" by force. No Protestant, for instance, might act as midwife, and midwives were to baptize children whose lives were uncertain into the Catholic faith. Then the expedient known as the "*dragonnades*" was invented. Soldiers were quartered on Protestant households, with instructions that they might commit what excesses they pleased. Under this abominable pressure many Protestants abjured their religion. Sufficient "conversions" had now been made to justify the Church in demanding the revocation of the edict on the ground that the Sect had been reduced to insignificant numbers. Colbert, who had seen the folly of the step, was dead, and his place was filled by Louvois, who did not.¹ The King's

¹ Louvois was only War Minister, but he was the most conspicuous of the ministers.

Jesuit Confessor, Père la Chaise, urged it ; Madame de Maintenon encouraged it. Moreover it would be a magnificent opportunity for proving the loyalty of the French Church to Catholicism and a set-off to the attitude she had been obliged to adopt towards the Pope in the struggle over the *Régale*. The accession of a Catholic king to the English throne seemed to suggest a general recrudescence of Catholicism even in Protestant countries. Everything pointed to the revocation of the edict, and on 22 October the step was taken.

The results of this momentous and so much applauded act were disastrous to France. In foreign politics it had the effect of alienating the last of her allies. The Elector of Brandenburg abandoned the French alliance and went over to the enemy. Indirectly, too, the revocation contributed to the overthrow of James II, and so helped to bring England finally into the opposing camp, with results how serious subsequent history will demonstrate. Worst of all it precipitated the ruin of the economic and industrial fabric which the wisdom and energy of Colbert had reared. The emigration of Protestants did not indeed begin with the revocation ; it had been going on during the whole period of the persecution. But the revocation completed the disaster. From Amiens 1600 out of 2000 Protestant families fled ; from Abbeville 80 out of 160. In Reims, where in 1686 there had been 1812 *métiers*, in 1698 only 950 remained. And the same story might be told of all the leading industrial centres. Linen alone, of all the manufactures, kept its head above water. The small private enterprises, on which the future of French industry really depended, perished with almost absolute completeness. And what France lost her neighbours gained. The *émigrés* went from France to teach their trades to trade rivals. England, Germany, and Holland thus enjoyed the fruits of Colbert's genius. England alone took nearly 60,000 refugees. The silk industry of London was established by French workmen. An expert from the *Gobelins* started the manufacture of tapestry at Exeter, while many other industries in which France had excelled were transplanted to more tolerant or more Protestant countries : Germany profited

to an even greater extent than England, and Holland also received many French refugees with the industries which they brought with them.

Louvois, who had succeeded Colbert, attempted to found new industries to replace those which the revocation had destroyed; he even tried to entice the experts back to France; and he obtained liberty for all foreign Protestant merchants to enter freely. But in vain. It would be an exaggeration to say that the revocation was the main cause of the economic crisis of the later years of Louis XIV, but at least it was a very considerable contributory cause. Thus, for the sake of the antiquated fetish of religious unity, grievous injury was done to the splendid industrial fabric reared by Colbert.¹ Louis XIV had set the seal on his absolutism by the repression of the one body which recalled the times when the kings of France had to make terms with their subjects. He may now be regarded as having reached the height of his absolute power.

But Louis was by no means satisfied. Nor would he be so until he had converted the truce of Ratisbon into a permanent settlement and rendered France ecclesiastically independent. To effect these objects he adopted a policy of terrorism in the hope of scaring Europe into submission. In 1684 he bombarded Genoa in the most high-handed fashion; and the doge hastened to Versailles to make submission (1685). He treated his allies Savoy and Brandenburg like naughty children when they showed signs of acting independently; wreaked fierce vengeance on the Protestant Alpine Cantons of the Vaudois (in 1686), and generally behaved as a tyrant. The result was not what he had hoped for. Alarmed at his violence, the Protestants of Europe began to draw together against the revoker of the edict, the persecutor of the Vaudois; while the Catholic

¹ It is interesting to contrast Louis' attitude when Catholics were threatened with severities in England with his attitude towards the French Protestants. In 1663 he wrote to the King of England pointing out that heretics were treated with kindness and moderation in other countries, and urging him to resist anti-Catholic legislation. "*Œuvres*," op. cit. v. 125, 126.

powers rallied round the Emperor against the tyrant who threatened the liberties of Germany. The result of this later movement was the celebrated League of Augsburg (formed 9 July, 1686), in which the Circles of Germany united in self-defence under the patronage of the Emperor, and which included Spain, Sweden, Bavaria, and later the Elector Palatine and the Duke of Holstein Gottorp. The League was both scattered and incomplete, but it showed Louis that he could not expect to enroach on Germany with impunity. Meanwhile the second of Louis' dreams, that of ecclesiastical independence, had brought him into sharp contest with Innocent XI. The first quarrel was over the French Ambassador's *droit d'asyle* in Rome. This *droit d'asyle*, which had exterritorialized not only the embassies but the quarters in which the embassies were situated, had been abandoned by all the powers with the exception of France. Louis—a law to himself—declined to be dictated to, and a sharp quarrel with the Pope was the result. A second dispute with the papacy arose from Louis' attempt to secure the Electorate of Cologne, to which the house of Bavaria had a sort of unwritten right, for his puppet the Archbishop of Strassburg. Disregarding the privileges of the Pope, he endeavoured to get his candidate elected; and over this matter too the quarrel between France and the papacy was sharp and menacing. The truth was that doctrinally Catholic, more Catholic even than the Pope, Louis conceived that, in matters of Church government, the Catholic standpoint was incompatible with absolutism.

All the time Austria and Hungary had been so occupied on the eastern frontier, where they were locked in a death grapple with the Turks, that (beyond presiding over the defensive League of Augsburg) Leopold had done little to thwart the designs of France. The year 1687 saw a great turn of the tide in the East. The battle of Mohács (1687), followed by the fall of Belgrade (1688), heralded the moment when the Emperor, freed from danger in the East, would be able to turn once more to the West. Louis saw the danger and determined to move before it developed. The year 1687-1688 was a period of great agitation. The birth of the Prince of Wales and the first stages of the

English Revolution opened a grave question in that direction ; and it was necessary to decide whether it would be better policy for France to throw herself between William of Orange and the English throne or to strike at Germany while the Emperor was still occupied in the East. So long, indeed, as James II reigned in England he might be relied upon to out-run Charles in his dependence on France. But James was not only more sincere, he was infinitely more clumsy than his brother ; he had completely alienated public opinion and was already speeding to his ruin.

In the light of after events it is clear that it would have been better for France had she abandoned her attack on Germany and created such a diversion in the Netherlands as would have prevented the sailing of William of Orange in 1688. By such a diversion and by patrolling the Channel with his fleet, which was at that time superior to the combined fleets of England and Holland, she might have made William's invasion impossible. This alternative received careful consideration and was deliberately abandoned. No doubt Louis reckoned on considerable opposition to William, and hoped that England would be neutralized by a prolonged civil war. He never dreamt that William would establish himself with ease on the English throne and thus capture England for the anti-French alliance which he contemplated. The great autocrat was at fault in his estimate of national feeling. He decided on the invasion of Germany, and in September, 1688, commenced operations against the Pope and the Emperor. Avignon was seized and an appeal against the Pope was made to a general council. At the same time Cologne, Liége, and the Palatinate were invaded, and siege was laid to Philippsburg. That town surrendered to Vauban after a costly siege on 29 October, just a week before the landing of William of Orange at Torbay. Mannheim surrendered on 12 November, Frankenthal on 19 November. By the close of the year the French were masters of the greater part of the Palatinate and of all the German left bank of the Rhine with the exception of Coblenz.

These hostilities were directed against the Empire alone, and Louis hoped that the war would not become general.

He had entirely miscalculated : his policy of terrorism, instead of paralysing, had simply provoked Europe, and in a very few months he found himself at war with all Europe and this time with England as an additional antagonist. The cruel and wanton devastation of the Palatinate in the spring of 1689 was a further act of provocation which simply added to the indignation of Europe. Poland and Bavaria declined Louis' advances, and on 4 May Bavaria allied itself with the Emperor. Next, Brandenburg, Saxony, Hanover, and Hesse banded themselves against him in the Concert of Magdeburg. The rupture with Spain in April was followed by a rupture with Holland. War was declared by England on 17 May. So that before the summer of 1689 Louis was face to face with a hostile Europe, united in a coalition to resist French aggression. The Grand Alliance, as it was called, included the Emperor, the Electors of Mainz and Trier, the Landgraves of Hesse Cassel and Hesse Darmstadt ; the Swabian, Franconian, Austrian, and Westphalian Circles. England, Spain, and Savoy also adhered to the alliance.

The years 1689-1690 saw no decisive military event. Noailles maintained himself successfully in Catalonia. On the Rhine, Brandenburg and Lorraine took Mainz in September and Bonn in October (1689). The Palatinate was subjected to a further devastation by the French. But the main danger to France was on the Dutch frontier, where Tournai was taken and Walloon Flanders ravaged by the allied armies. For 1690 an advance into France was projected, Waldeck operating in Champagne and Brandenburg along the Moselle. Luxembourg was sent to meet this attack, and on 1 July won a decisive victory over Waldeck at Fleurus.

Louis had all this time been hoping to reverse the situation in England. James II had taken refuge in France, and was quite ready to be restored to his throne by French assistance. Louis helped him to effect a landing in Ireland, and twice, in the battles of Bantry Bay and Beachy Head, the French fleet vindicated its superiority over the English. But he did not effectively isolate Ireland as with his superior fleet he might have done : and no victories at sea or on the Continent

could compensate for the overwhelming and perfectly preventable disaster of the Boyne on 11 July, 1690 (the day after the battle of Beachy Head and ten days after the battle of Fleurus). Louis did not follow up the victory of Beachy Head: the navy after the death of Colbert's son Seignelay had fallen (1690) under the incompetent control of Pontchartrain, and, instead of attempting effectively to repair the disaster of the Boyne, Louis presided in quite the old style over the capture of Mons, which was perfectly useless (spring of 1691). His successes in the Low Countries and in Savoy blinded him to failures elsewhere, of which the most significant was the defeat of Tourville at la Hogue (19 May, 1692). Louis relied on James' assurance that half the English fleet would desert, and gave Tourville orders to fight "fort ou foible, où que ce fut,"¹ with the result that the supremacy of the French fleet was thrown away, and the best work of Colbert sacrificed. The battle of La Hogue destroyed all hope of a Stuart restoration and left William free to interfere on the Continent. There the struggle was prolonged and bitter. Louis, thanks to the military genius of Luxembourg, at first more than held his own, but he was fighting for glory, his opponents for their very existence. On 5 June, 1692, Namur surrendered to the French, and on 3 August, Luxembourg defeated William in the battle of Steinkirk, but only after a fearful struggle and with terrible loss to himself. The French, moreover, still maintained their supremacy in the Mediterranean, while an invasion of Dauphiné by Victor Amadeus of Savoy ended in failure. It was clear that, though hard pressed, France was by no means at the end of her resources. Louis' army remained a magnificent fighting machine, and could be relied on to inflict defeats upon the allies. But time was against France. Her prostration was by now extreme, and her supremacy at sea had been rudely shaken. In 1693 Luxembourg once more defeated William at Neerwinden (29 July) and the French took Charleroi (11 October). The fleet also partly retrieved its reputation by the capture of a large portion of an Anglo-Dutch merchant fleet (28 June). Savoy had been defeated

¹ Saint-Simon, "Mémoires" (ed. Boislisle), I. 51.

and a French army once more penetrated into Catalonia. Louis, however, had failed to take Liège, a rebuff which so annoyed him that he never again took personal part in military operations. Then, in 1694, the English fleet recovered the command of the Mediterranean with the consequence that the French campaign in Spain was checked. William, undaunted by repeated reverses, besieged and eventually captured Namur (1695). In 1696 preparations were made for the invasion of England, and the English fleet had to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean. Meanwhile France had been betraying a desire for peace, and had managed to win Savoy over from the Grand Alliance.¹ Louis announced his willingness to abandon the objects for which he had been fighting (i.e. the terms of Ratisbon) and to surrender Luxemburg and Lorraine and recognize William in England. Sweden was called in to mediate. A congress met at Ryswick in May, 1697, and after prolonged negotiation the treaties of Ryswick were signed on 20 September and 30 October. Louis recognized William III as King of England, undertook not to assist his enemies, and acknowledged Anne as his heiress. To the Dutch he granted the commercial concessions for which they longed; the exclusive tariff of 1667 was to be modified within three months, failing which the tariff of 1664 was to be revived. The Emperor was more difficult to satisfy. In the end he agreed to the cession of Strassburg and undertook to maintain the Catholic religion in the districts restored to him—a condition which sheds a curious light on the policy of Austrians as sovereigns of the Holy Roman Empire.

Louis had failed in the object he had set himself in 1688. His failure had been the work of the Grand Alliance. He had been obliged to surrender Lorraine and all his conquests as well as the districts secured by the *réunions*—with the exception of Strassburg. The Palatinate dispute was submitted to arbitration; Cologne was handed back to Bavaria; the Dutch tariff was abandoned; Luxemburg and all the places conquered from Spain were restored; the House of Orange was recognized in England; Savoy recovered

¹ Treaty of Turin (29 August, 1696).

Pignerolo and secured the recognition of her independence. That was the extent of Louis' failure. On the other side of the scale were Strassburg and Pondicherry (handed over by the Dutch); above all an intact France and an honourable peace at a moment when peace was all-important, not only on account of the exhaustion of the country, but on account of the imminence of the question of the Spanish Succession.

The unfortunate Charles of Spain, whose life always seemed to hang by a thread, had outlived all expectations; but it was now thought impossible that he could live much longer: and Louis, frustrated in his attempt to aggrandize France at the expense of the Empire, was already bent on securing for a French prince the whole of the Spanish inheritance. He had in fact come to terms not from military necessity—there was nothing in the military situation to make him do so, though the deaths of Louvois (in 1691) and Luxembourg (in 1695) had been serious blows—but from the desire to conciliate the powers with a view to securing their support or at least their neutrality in the matter of the Spanish Succession.

Charles II was childless. He had two sisters, one of whom had married Louis XIV and the other the Emperor Leopold. Of these the Queen of France was the elder, but she had formally renounced her claim to the Spanish throne at the time of her marriage. The validity of the renunciation, however, was doubtful; the dowry which should have accompanied it had never been paid. If the renunciation were invalid the dauphin was undoubtedly the rightful heir to the Spanish throne. If not, the Emperor Leopold had had a daughter by his Spanish wife; she had married the Elector of Bavaria; the son born of this marriage, Joseph Ferdinand, Electoral Prince of Bavaria, might be regarded as the rightful claimant. His claim was at any rate better than that of the son of the Emperor's second marriage. True the Emperor was himself a grandson of Philip III, but so was Louis XIV; and there was no getting over the prior claims of the descendants of Philip IV. Under these circumstances the direct issue was between France and Austria, Bourbon and Habsburg; but the claims of the Electoral Prince would undoubtedly be a useful card in

the diplomatic game. Feeling in Spain perhaps for the moment rather inclined to the Bourbons, but, if so, only because France alone might be expected to keep the dominions intact; and Spanish pride was greatly averse to the idea of a partition. Meanwhile, however, Louis XIV was already considering the question of partition. He had already had experience of the robustness of the maritime powers and saw the necessity of making an arrangement which would be acceptable to them. No arrangement would be so which deprived them of their trade with Spain. Hence the partition treaties which were an expression of Louis' desire to propitiate England and Holland.

In October, 1698, France agreed with William that the Electoral Prince should have the bulk of the inheritance, the dauphin receiving the Two Sicilies and other compensation in Italy, and the Archduke Charles, the Habsburg claimant, receiving Milan. Spain at once turned round, and Charles II made a new will accepting the Electoral Prince, provided he got the whole inheritance. Whether a settlement of the great question could have been arranged on this basis we shall never know. It is more than possible that France regarded it only as a temporary expedient and was playing fast and loose; more than probable that the Emperor would not have submitted to the aggrandizement of the house of Wittelsbach. It is needless to speculate, for on 5 February, 1699, the Electoral Prince died; and the melting-pot was placed on the fire once more. The issue was now a straight one between Habsburg and Bourbon. William and Louis set to work on a second partition treaty, which was finally arranged in March. It gave Spain, the Netherlands, and the Spanish oversea dominions, to the Habsburgs, who avowedly preferred Italy; and the Italian possessions to the dauphin, who ought to have preferred the Netherlands. But in a treaty with William it was impossible for France so much as to mention the Netherlands. There was an additional arrangement by which the Milanese was to be exchanged for Lorraine. Charles II, now *in extremis*, made a last will in which, ignoring the partition treaties as Louis had probably known that he would, and clinging to the idea of maintaining the union of the Spanish dominions, he left

Spain and all her possessions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, the dauphin's second son, but with a proviso that the crowns of France and Spain could never be united. If the French line failed the Archduke Charles was to succeed, but under a similar proviso against the union on one head of the Spanish and Imperial crowns. The claims of the house of Orleans, which were in reality more valid than those of the Archduke, were ignored: in the event of the Archduke's line dying out Savoy was to inherit. The will was the protest of Spain against the partition policy; her final assertion of the essential integrity of the Spanish dominions.

Louis XIV found himself confronted on the death of Charles II (1 November, 1700) with the necessity for making perhaps the gravest decision of his life. If he accepted for his grandson the magnificent offer of the Spanish crown, he would, on the one hand, greatly increase the prestige of France in Europe, and that was a matter very near to his heart; but on the other hand he would have to tear up the Partition Treaty, the ink on which was hardly dry, a proceeding which could hardly fail to embroil him with the maritime powers. Now it was this very embroilment with the maritime powers (of which he had had such unpleasant experience in previous years) that he wished to avoid. It was possible that William would not carry England with him; his relations with his subjects were strained. On the other hand the commercial interests in England were deeply involved in the future of Spain, and though England would not always fight for glory she might be relied upon to fight for her pocket. If on the other hand he adhered to the Partition Treaty to which the Emperor had declined to agree, then he not only sacrificed the finest opportunity he had ever had for raising the prestige of France, but he handed the Spanish inheritance forthwith to the Habsburgs, and might have to fight Europe single-handed (for England was not to be counted on) in order to secure a fragment of the dominions the whole of which was now in his grasp. Under these circumstances, war seeming inevitable in any case, it is difficult to blame Louis for his decision to accept the will of Charles II. Anjou was solemnly informed of the

greatness to which he had so unexpectedly succeeded and was greeted by his grandfather with royal honours.¹ The effect on Europe was electric. Things sprang back to the condition in which they had been at the time of the Grand Alliance. Both Leopold and William saw that war was inevitable, and negotiations commenced for a revival of the Grand Alliance. Louis did nothing to stave off the crisis. He reserved the rights of his grandson to the succession in France, which was an ominous suggestion of a possible union of the two crowns (December, 1700). In 1701 he violated the peace by seizing and garrisoning with French troops the fortresses in the Netherlands which had been allotted to the Dutch. Perhaps he counted on the resistance of the English nation to a warlike policy. If so, he once more miscalculated popular feeling, for William very soon had English opinion with him, and in July he was able to open formal negotiations at the Hague. The Emperor desired to obtain the whole of the Spanish possessions in Italy, and the Maritime Powers agreed to this on condition that any conquests made by them in the West Indies should be guaranteed to them (Grand Alliance, 7 September, 1701). Commerce—prosperity—remained their object; political aggrandizement—power—that of the Habsburgs. Louis' reply to the Grand Alliance was to inform the dying James II that he would recognize the claim of his son to the throne of Great Britain. This finally alienated public opinion in England.

The majority of the Princes of the Empire joined the Grand Alliance, amongst them the Electors of Trier and Mainz, the Palatinate and Hanover, together with Hesse Cassel and Hesse Darmstadt. The Electors of Bavaria and Cologne, however, threw in their lot with France, and Portugal and Savoy decided to do the same until such time as it suited them to turn their very easily turned coats.

France embarked on the War of the Spanish Succession with one obvious initial strategical advantage. In 1692 she had had to fight her way through the Spanish Netherlands to the Dutch frontier inch by inch; in 1703 the whole of the Spanish Netherlands was hers, and the moment war was declared she

¹ See Saint-Simon, *op. cit.* vii. 320 *sqq.*

could turn the hearts of the Dutch to water by a home thrust into Holland itself. By such a thrust she knew that she could count on diverting for the defence of timorous Holland a large proportion of the forces opposed to her, and so keep Central Europe clear for her main attack on her true opponent, the Emperor. Such was the plan with which France embarked on the War of the Spanish Succession. But if there were points in her favour she also laboured under one grave disadvantage—a disadvantage which she could only discover in the school of experience. Her great commanders were dead, the last of them, the wonderful hunchback Duke of Luxembourg, had died in 1695 and his loss to France was irreparable. Of her remaining generals Villars was a brilliant and original commander, Boufflers was a hard fighter who had occasional flashes of genius, Vendôme and Berwick were not without capacity, but there was no commander upon the French side who could fight upon terms of equality with either Marlborough or Eugène, and the combination of Marlborough and Eugène proved irresistible. The genius of those two great commanders is more a matter of English and of Austrian than of French history. They moved from place to place with astounding secrecy and demoralizing rapidity, striking at the most unexpected points. They laughed at the great fortified lines with which Flanders was seamed and which had paralysed all former invaders, and in a very short time they completely ruined the morale of the French troops and of practically all the French generals except Villars. If ever a war was lost and won by the personal element, it was that of the Spanish Succession.

On the other hand it must not be forgotten that Marlborough was grievously hampered by the incompetence of some of the allied commanders, of the surly Prince of Baden in particular, and above all, by the apathy of the Dutch and their selfish disregard of military considerations; time after time, by their refusal to co-operate, they threw away the opportunities which he had created. The Dutch conception of war was the protection of Holland not the destruction of the enemy, and there can be no doubt that France could have been crushed by the allies much sooner but for the conduct of the “rascal Dutch”.

Profiting by the new conditions in Spanish Flanders, the French struck at once at Holland, Boufflers driving Athlone (the English commander) across the Waal (June, 1702) and threatening Nimeguen. In July Marlborough took over the command and turned the tables by crossing the French frontier ; four several times the obstinacy of the Dutch and the insubordination of their generals deprived him of what looked like certain victory. Much to his chagrin he was thus prevented from bringing the enemy to action, but one by one he reduced the fortresses of the Meuse until he entered Liège on 31 October. Meanwhile the French armies had had better success in what was really the main theatre of the war ; Villars had defeated Louis of Baden at Friedlingen (14 October) and Tallard had captured Trier and Trarbach on the Moselle. Rooke and Ormond had failed egregiously at Cadiz but captured an enormous treasure fleet at Vigo. The main French plan of campaign was therefore by the close of 1702 developing well, and the following year brought it to the verge of fruition. Villars crossed the Rhine in March and effected a junction with the Elector of Bavaria in May. The victory of Hochstadt in September, 1703, was the result of this junction. In the same month Tallard had defeated the Prince of Hesse Cassel and retaken Landau. The beginning of the year 1704 thus saw the affairs of central Europe in a very menacing condition. The Elector had pushed on down the Danube as far as Linz and was only waiting for further reinforcements from France to deliver his blow against Vienna. The only obstacle to the advance of these reinforcements was a weak and ill-led army under the Prince of Baden in the vicinity of Philippsburg ; Tallard was told off to deal with this army, and Boufflers and Villars were at the head of 90,000 men in the Netherlands, which seemed amply sufficient to contain Marlborough and even to reverse the situation in that quarter.

Marlborough, however, was looking at the war as a whole, and no detail of the situation had escaped him. He now determined to disregard the outcry of the Dutch, to withdraw the bulk of his forces from the Netherlands, to secure the co-operation of Eugène, and to strike a blow on the Danube,

where, as he rightly judged, the great issues of the war were for the time being concentrated. Admirable as was his plan, even more admirable were the reticence and directness he displayed in its execution. When he began to move up the Rhine no one, least of all his opponents, dreamt that he was meditating a march on the Danube. The French feared for the Moselle and Lorraine, and prepared for the defence thereof; they were utterly unprepared for a long and rapid march in pursuit of the enemy, and when Marlborough, after a clever feint on the Moselle, set off at full speed by Mainz and the valley of the Necker, they could only watch his departure in helpless bewilderment. On 10 June, Eugène and Marlborough met for the first time at Mondelheim. The allies had now two great objects in view: the first to cross the Danube and bring the Elector of Bavaria to action, the second to prevent the advance of further French reinforcements. Eugène was told off to the latter task while Marlborough advanced along the northern bank of the Danube, joined forces with the Prince of Baden, and awaited the arrival of his infantry. His objective was now Donauwörth, which place, if he could capture it, would give him a bridge over the Danube. The Elector, suspecting his design, had thrown the troops over the Rhine and occupied the Schellenberg, a hill which covers Donauwörth on the northern banks of the Danube. Marlborough was sadly hampered by the fact that he had to share his command in alternate days with the incapable Prince of Baden; he was therefore obliged to carry out both the preliminaries of the attack on the Schellenberg and the attack itself in a single day. It was not till 6 p.m. on 2 July that the attack was delivered by troops who had already been on foot for more than twelve hours; nevertheless it was successful. The enemy were driven out of their position and swept into the river; not more than one quarter rejoined the main army of the Elector. The allies lost some 5000 killed and wounded, but they had secured the town and bridge of Donauwörth. The Elector withdrew to Augsburg, and Marlborough, isolating that town, set to work to cut off his supplies.

Meanwhile matters had not been going so well with Eugène. Villeroy, whom we left in a state of stupefaction on the Moselle, had moved up the Rhine and effected a junction with Tallard; and now Tallard had advanced to the Danube, Eugène not being in sufficient force to prevent him, and on 25 July had joined the Elector at Augsburg. Eugène had moved parallel with him down the Danube but on its northern bank, and the Allies were now in the dangerous position of having their two main armies sundered by the Danube and liable to be crushed in detail by the enemy, who since the arrival of Tallard was in superior force. The Elector and Tallard decided to cross the Rhine and strike at Eugène; they did not reckon on Marlborough's extraordinary mobility. With superlative skill the latter threw his army in detail across the river farther down, and, when Tallard came into touch with the allies on the River Kessel (a northern tributary of the Danube), he found that he had to deal not with Eugène alone but with Eugène and Marlborough combined. Tallard had no idea of offering battle under these conditions, but here again he omitted to reckon on Marlborough's quality of decision and rapidity. Almost taken by surprise in a river fog, on 13 August he was hurried into an engagement at a moment when his troops were very faultily disposed. Marlborough and Eugène were quick to notice and to take advantage of his mistakes. By a clever feint on the village of Blenheim, which is actually on the Danube and was the extreme right of Tallard's line, they forced him to weaken still further his already weak centre. While Eugène occupied the enemy's left Marlborough then delivered his main attack on the weakened spot, pierced it, and took the whole of the enemy's right in flank, rolled it up towards Blenheim and the Danube, drove the greater part of it into the river, and compelled the flower of the French army, who had been uselessly crowded into the village of Blenheim and had scarcely fired a shot, to surrender unconditionally. The losses of the French in this battle and the pursuit which followed it were hardly less than 40,000 men. It was a defeat such as no European army had suffered since the rout of the Spaniards at Rocroi, and the

prestige of the French army and its morale did not recover from it until the days of Napoleon I. The whole tide of war was completely turned ; the French retired behind the Rhine, the Elector of Bavaria abandoned his Electorate, and the allies marched into Landau in triumph. In the same year (24 August) Admiral Rooke, having failed to bring the French fleet to action in the Mediterranean, seized Gibraltar, and successfully resisted the attempt of the French to recapture it.

The year 1705 witnessed a pause in the run of France's adversity ; Eugène, it is true, had the best of the campaign in Italy, but Marlborough was terribly hampered in his projected campaign in the Netherlands by the apathy of the allies ; nevertheless he effected one great *tour de force*—the piercing of the great fortified lines of the Geete, which stretched from Namur to Antwerp and were regarded as impregnable. Marlborough had been driving Villeroy step by step up the Meuse and, after the fall of Liège, the latter had retired into the entrenchments of the Geete. Marlborough penetrated these entrenchments with apparent ease, hustled Villeroy behind the Dyle, and would in all probability have made an end of him but for the treacherous behaviour of the Dutch. The same year witnessed the capture of Barcelona by that wayward genius Peterborough. It was the next year (1706) that saw the triumph of the Grand Alliance ; early in that year Villeroy was instructed to offer battle ; he therefore moved out from behind the Dyle and advanced in the direction of Maestricht, where Marlborough had his head-quarters. The Duke at once marched out to meet him, and the two armies met at Ramillies (12 May). Villeroy's dispositions were as faulty as those of Tallard had been at Blenheim, and Marlborough took similar advantage of them. Ramillies was by no means so wonderful a victory as Blenheim, but in its effects it fell little short of that battle. The pursuit was a long and terrible one, and no rally was possible. In a single month Marlborough swept the Netherlands from the Meuse to the sea, and by the end of June Ostend was in his hands. Ramillies threw the French everywhere on the defensive once more, and its effect was felt wherever opposing armies were confronted ; in Italy, where Eugène won the

Battle of Turin in September and drove the French out of Piedmont ; in Alsace, where Villars was deprived of a victory over Louis of Baden ; and in Spain, where Peterborough carried all before him.

Louis XIV was profoundly moved by these reverses, and expressed his willingness to treat. He negotiated in the first instance with the Dutch and made four separate sets of proposals to them. Marlborough's inflexibility prevented their responding to these advances, and in spite of Louis' feverish efforts to break up the coalition the year 1707 found it as strong as ever. The French had to abandon Naples, but in Spain the cause of Philip V prospered. Berwick won a considerable victory at Almanza (25 April), and this was followed by the submission of Valencia and Aragon. Only in Catalonia could the allies maintain a foothold. On the other hand they were able to invade Provence and lay siege to Toulon. Marlborough, meanwhile, was being contained by Vendôme and the Elector of Bavaria, while Villars prosecuted a successful campaign on the Rhine. He pierced the lines of the allies between Philippsburg and Stollhofen and it was only the diversion in Provence that prevented him from invading Bavaria and threatening Vienna. But although the year's campaigning had not been unfavourable to the French, the treasury was depleted, and it was more than ever desirable that the coalition should be broken up. Negotiations with the Dutch were once more opened, by an offer of commercial advantages from France. But as that power refused to consider the division of the Spanish heritage the Dutch refused, and there was nothing for it but to continue the war.

In 1708 the struggle was once more concentrated in the Netherlands where Vendôme took command of an army of 100,000 men. The presence with the troops of Burgundy, the heir-apparent, of the Duke of Berry, and of the rightful but exiled King of England indicated that an unusual effort was meditated. Ghent and Bruges quickly surrendered to the French and Marlborough, who in this campaign had the assistance of Eugène, had to think of the defence of Brussels. With 80,000 men he engaged and defeated the French at Oudenarde

on the Scheldt in a very hazardous action, for he faced an enemy of superior force without having made any dispositions; it is probable that, but for the insubordination of the Duke of Burgundy, who commanded the left and kept it out of action during the entire battle, things might have ended differently. Marlborough and Eugène at Oudenarde traded on their own wits and on the stupidity of their opponents and the results justified them (11 July). Within a week the allies had crossed the frontiers of France in the neighbourhood of Lille. Marlborough's desire was now to penetrate into the heart of France, but every precept of military orthodoxy commanded that before such an advance was made, the city of Lille should be reduced. Lille was the capital of French Flanders and one of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Vauban. It was held by Marshal Boufflers and a powerful garrison, while, in spite of Oudenarde, there were still 94,000 French hovering round. That, under the eyes of this force, the allied generals managed to move their siege train and convoy seventy-five miles from Brussels to Lille, to invest the city, to scare away the relieving force, to bring in supplies by way of Ostend from England, to raise the siege of Brussels which had been begun in November by the Elector of Bavaria, and finally on 9 December to force Boufflers to surrender,¹ can only be accounted for by the immense prestige which the two great commanders had established and the fear which they inspired. The surrender of Lille was quickly followed by that of Ghent and Bruges. In September of the same year the Island of Minorca had fallen into the hands of the English, who thus got their first real foothold in the Mediterranean.

The French were now in serious straits and sent to the front their one really capable general, Villars, who threw up a strong network of entrenchments, known as the lines of la Bassée, between the Scarpe and the Lys, for the defence of Arras. These lines Marlborough and Eugène had no intention of attacking, for they had an equally good and undefended access to France by way of Mons and Maubeuge. Having reduced the city of

¹ Boufflers' defence had been a glorious one, and he marched out with the honours of war.

Tournai, whose citadel was immensely strong, they advanced upon Mons; Villars was forced to leave his entrenchments and to throw himself across their path at Malplaquet in a glade of the forests between Mons and Maubeuge. The tactics of Malplaquet recall those of Blenheim and Ramillies. The fierce and frightfully costly attack on the French left was delivered simply in order to force Villars to weaken his centre and right which were drawn up across the glade. This attack was delivered through a thick wood and became a mere hand-to-hand contest of which it was impossible to retain control. Before it had been pressed home the Prince of Orange, who commanded the allies' left (held in reserve until such time as the French right should be sufficiently weakened), advanced prematurely, and was driven back with a loss of over 6000 killed and wounded. Marlborough and Eugène extricated him and proceeded inexorably with their task. The battle was one of the sternest and bloodiest ever fought, both Villars and Eugène were wounded, and it was only when the last reserves of the allies were brought up that the French gave way. So exhausted were the allies that Boufflers was able to withdraw the French troops unmolested from the field. The French lost 12,000 men and the allies not less than 20,000.¹ On 9 October Mons capitulated, and the campaign came to an end.

If the French could still fight a Malplaquet in the Netherlands, the coalition was still far from being able to drive Philip from Spain. Sentiment in Spain inclined more and more to the Bourbons and the fighting in 1710 was entirely favourable to Philip. Europe was thus at stale-mate. A secret understanding between Holland and England (29 October, 1709) destroyed the hope of breaking up the coalition, and during 1710 prolonged negotiations were carried on at Gertruydenberg. These included the amazing suggestion that Louis should declare war on his own grandson, and help to eject him from Spain. When he had been forced to agree to some form of this concession he found it rejected and was

¹ Louis even claimed that at Malplaquet he had obtained the principal advantage ("Œuvres," op. cit. VI. 204).

obliged to brace himself for further hostilities. He preferred at least, he said, to make war on his enemies rather than on his children. The Emperor Joseph, who had succeeded his father Leopold in 1705, was the great obstacle to peace. He stood out for the complete abandonment by Philip of his Spanish claims. If, however, England would be content with trade concessions and Newfoundland, the Dutch would certainly be content with the establishment of their barrier; Philip would thus be allowed to keep Spain, and the Emperor would be left in the lurch.

Events of importance, meanwhile, were happening in England. The Whig ministry, and with it the ascendancy of Marlborough, was tottering to its fall: the Tories stood for peace and the abandonment of all that had been claimed and aimed at by England since 1703. Louis XIV himself was ready to accept Spain and the Indies and to abandon the remainder of the Spanish dominions. On 22 June, 1711, he wrote to his grandson: "There are occasions when one has to know how to lose, and if you were in quiet possession of Spain and the Indies, you would have no need to regret the places you would have to surrender to the English in order to persuade them to make peace".¹ The death of the Emperor Joseph on 17 April, 1711, was a further great incentive to peace. The allies were naturally disinclined to fight for the reunion of the Spanish dominions under the Archduke Charles, who was now not only the claimant to these dominions but the natural successor of the Emperor. Already in 1711 secret negotiations between England and France were taking place, and an understanding between these countries was being reached which was the first breath of the Treaty of Utrecht.

The campaigns of 1710-11 therefore, in particular the latter, were of a peculiar character. Marlborough's forces were being starved and reduced as they had never been before, and he himself abused and persecuted; the French, aware of the imminence of peace, desired only to maintain their position without further loss, and had no idea of risking another en-

¹ "Œuvres," op. cit. VI. 214, 215.

gagement with their great opponent. Marlborough's first stroke in 1710 was to capture Douai (26 June). The invasion of France which he designed was thwarted by a new line of entrenchments thrown up by Villars and stretching from the sea coast and the mouth of the Canche to the Meuse; Marlborough contented himself with the siege and capture of Béthune, Aire, and Saint-Venant. The following year (1711) saw one of the cleverest and most effective of his campaigns; it was also his last. The object was to penetrate Villars' lines, and, to attain it, he displayed wonderful cunning and resource; marches and counter-marches, feints and withdrawals, so puzzled Villars that in the end he was lured into destroying his own most important fort and so giving Marlborough the opening he required. The lines were pierced, but Marlborough declined battle; he, too, knew that the war was over and that further bloodshed was useless. The siege and capture of Bouchain was the only fruit of Marlborough's strategy. It was the turn of the diplomatists.

The Grand Alliance was now obviously breaking up, and the efforts of the Austrian statesmen failed to prevent the acceptance by the Dutch of proposals for a peace conference at Utrecht to consider the proposals of the French King. This conference met in January, 1712, but the war continued while its deliberations were in progress. Eugène and Ormond besieged and took Quesnoy (4 July); suddenly Ormond was instructed that England and France had agreed to an armistice (16 July) and that he was to withdraw his troops; but the bulk of the troops refused to desert Eugène, who on 16 July invested Landrecies. Villars, however, who, it will be remembered, had already made a good stand against the undefeated combination of Marlborough and Eugène at the height of its prestige, was quite a match for Eugène under the new conditions, and he knew that a French success on the eve of peace would have a great effect on the negotiations. He fell upon the Dutch contingent at Denain and annihilated it (24 July). This victory ruined Eugène's plan for an invasion of France by way of the Oise. His magazine fell into the enemy's hands. Douai fell on 4 September, Quesnoy on 8 October, and

Bouchain on 9 October. The Battle of Denain was most important in its consequences. It made peace certain and peace on conditions reasonable to France, and it proved the enormous fighting strength that remained in France, exhausted as she was by years of strenuous and on the whole unsuccessful warfare. Louis' hand was enormously strengthened. He was well served at this critical juncture by the want of unity among the allies, and in the peace which was now signed he made terms far more favourable to himself than were justified by the course of the war.

The settlement—which for the sake of brevity may be called the Peace of Utrecht—was in reality a whole constellation of treaties, no less than nine in number; the bulk of these were signed at Utrecht on 11 April, 1713, but others were signed at other places and on other dates. The most important, because it rendered the others inevitable, was that between France and England. It had for some time been apparent that England was determined on peace whether her allies agreed or not; and it was this determination of England and her desertion of her allies that was the salvation of Louis XIV. But he had to make concessions. Most important to Britain, he had to abandon his support of the Stuart dynasty, to dismiss King James III from France, where he had so long found asylum, and to recognize the Hanoverian succession. He was obliged also to agree to every possible safeguard against the possibility of a future union of the crowns of France and Spain.¹ In view of the fact that since the deaths of the Dauphin and of the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany (17 April, 1711, 18 February, 1712, and 11 March, 1712) there was but a single frail life between Philip V and the French throne this seemed at the time a more important point than it ultimately proved to be. Dunkirk, over which at the time of its purchase Louis had exulted so loudly, had now to be razed and the harbour filled up. Louis promptly began to dig a great harbour at Mardick close by. Most important in its bearing on the future but reckoned a

¹ The Dukes of Orleans and Berry renounced their claims to the Spanish throne.

minor matter at the time, extensive concessions were made by France to England in the New World. Acadia (Nova Scotia), Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, and adjacent islands, together with Saint-Christopher (one of the Leeward Islands) were handed over to England, while France retained Cape Breton Island and the mouth of the Saint-Lawrence, and secured the rights of French fishermen in the surrendered territories. Finally a Commercial and Navigation Treaty was signed between the two powers, England was placed on the footing of the most favoured nation and the rights of neutrals in war were safeguarded.¹ This last provision, however, was ignored or evaded by England; had it been strictly observed the history of the eighteenth century might have been very different.

On the same date was signed the treaty between France and the United Provinces, to which the Dutch would never have agreed had their hands not been forced by the preliminaries already agreed upon between France and Britain. France was to surrender to the United Provinces her captures in the Spanish Netherlands, which the Dutch were then to make over to Austria after their barrier had been secured. A portion of Gelderland, however, was surrendered to Prussia, while Lille, Aire, Béthune, and Saint-Venant were restored to France. A commercial treaty was signed and the same rights of neutrals were laid down as had been laid down in the treaty with Britain. France also agreed to obtain from Spain commercial concessions for the Dutch.

To Victor Amadeus II France agreed to restore Savoy and Nice and to guarantee possession of Sicily (probably the concession of all others most distasteful to Louis). A treaty ceding Sicily was to be signed by Spain. With Portugal France also came to terms, agreeing to recognize her colonies on the Amazon. This clause was in point of fact favourable to England, for the bulk of the trade in this quarter was hers. To Prussia the larger part of Upper Gelderland was ceded with securities for the preservation of the Catholic faith. Neufchâtel and

¹ A return to the conditions of 1664, with the exception of four sorts of merchandise.

Vallengin were also handed to Prussia, while Orange, an illogical remnant of the old Burgundian kingdom on which Prussia had claims, was definitely handed to France. The royal dignity of the Elector, as King of Prussia, was recognized. These five treaties were all signed at Utrecht on 11 April, 1713.

Complementary to the above was the agreement between Britain and Spain signed on 13 July, 1713. Philip abandoned all claims on the French Crown; he undertook not to alienate the Spanish dominions in America, confirmed the cession of Gibraltar under certain conditions, and ceded Minorca to England. He also accorded to England a monopoly of the slave trade with the Spanish colonies for the next thirty years, and the privilege of sending annually to Portobello in those colonies one English trader of 500 tons; this became the thin end of the wedge for an extensive contraband trade.

From these treaties the Emperor had significantly stood out. He could not bring himself to abandon his claims on the Spanish succession; he determined to fight on. But, shorn of the subsidies which the allies had paid him, his armies were powerless and Eugène could do nothing to prevent Villars crossing the Rhine. Landau and Freiburg were lost, and at length the Emperor accepted the inevitable and permitted Eugène to open negotiations with Villars. These negotiations ended on 7 March, 1714, in the Treaty of Rastadt between the Emperor and France. This treaty was a confirmation of the terms of Westphalia and Ryswick and as such a triumph for France. At the nadir of his fortunes Louis was able to secure in one direction, at any rate, a re-enactment of the very terms which he had exacted at their zenith. The Rhine frontier was secured, Alt-Breisach and Kehl and Freiburg being restored to the Empire while France retained Strassburg and recovered Landau. Bavaria and Cologne were restored to the positions they had occupied before the war, and many of the petty princes of the Empire were reinstated.¹ All this, however, had been done without

¹ The Elector of Bavaria had got provisional possession of Luxemburg, Namur and Charleroi at Utrecht, as a guarantee for the recovery of his dignities: he had also been promised Sardinia which he never got.

the sanction of the imperial Diet, and it was extremely doubtful if the Protestant Princes would agree to any treaty which re-enacted the terms of Ryswick, for that treaty had in practice been very injurious to them. In the end, however, despite their protests, the treaty was confirmed by the Diet at Baden, on 7 September, 1714.

The closing act in this great series of treaties, upon which the political fabric of Europe was to rest for thirty-three years, was the securing to Holland of the barrier on which her safety depended. Already there had been two "Barrier Treaties" in 1709 and 1713, of which the second had been much the less favourable to the Dutch. When the barrier was finally settled by the third Barrier Treaty (15 November, 1715), more satisfactory terms were granted; Namur, Tournai, Menin, Furnes, Warneton, Ypres and Knocke were the places selected to be occupied by 35,000 Dutch troops, paid two-fifths by Austria and three-fifths by Holland; and the Dutch secured also the joint right to garrison Dendermonde.

The weakness and want of unity of the allies had enabled Louis to secure terms altogether more favourable to France than were justified by the course of a war in which she had been almost uniformly unsuccessful. France indeed had gained infinitely more to all outward appearance than either England or Holland. For in 1714 no one realized the importance of the foundation of the colonial empire of England; and it was in the colonies that England compensated herself for her exertions. Holland had to be content with the securing of her barrier, a sure sign that the period of her decline had begun, while France retained all her territory, recovered Lille, and secured for the House of Bourbon Spain itself and the Spanish colonies. From the personal aspect—that of glory, aggrandizement, power—the Peace, though not such a triumph as he had at one time hoped for, was still a real triumph for Louis XIV, and it is the best possible testimony to his ability in diplomacy that he was able to emerge without loss, nay with positive gain, from a war which to another nation or another monarch would have been disastrous. But the gains were ill worth the price paid. France was worn out after a reign which

had been marked by incessant war. Little is heard of the miseries of the people through the pomp of court and the din of battle, but it would be difficult to exaggerate the increasing destitution of the population as the reign draws to its close. Even Louis recognized though he did nothing to mitigate it. The year of Malplaquet was the most terrible of all. Famine stalked through the land ; men ate carrion fifteen days dead, and women smothered their babies because they could not nurse them. While we are busy with wars and treaties, court functions and fêtes, it must not be forgotten that these were paid for with the life-blood of the lower classes. The armies were out of all proportion to the population of the country, the revenues out of all proportion to its taxable capacity (at least under the existing financial system). And while the King lived in unparalleled splendour the people literally starved. Never probably in any country under any government was misery so great and so widespread as it was in France under Louis XIV. From this misery France, naturally the richest country in Europe, might perhaps have made a quick recovery, and so it is less for his continual warfare that Louis stands condemned than for his failure to see the necessity for reform, to listen to the warnings of Colbert and of men like Vauban and Boisguillebert, who told him of the necessity of reform and even pointed out the ways in which it should be carried out. As he had turned a deaf ear to Colbert so he suppressed the works of Vauban and Boisguillebert.

Louis was now seventy-six years of age and only survived the Peace of Utrecht one year. Since the turning-point of the reign in 1685 there had been little of moment in domestic affairs. The country was numb and paralysed, and the sap hardly moved in the tree. The failure of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to suppress Protestantism was illustrated in 1702 by a fierce rising of the Huguenots in the highlands of the Cevennes, and in spite of its barbarous repression the Huguenot faith was never extirpated in that region. The whole story of the later years of the reign is one of fierce and useless repression. Not only religious but municipal liberties were trampled on, and the municipalities were reduced to a position of utter impotence

from which they did not recover until after the Revolution. Louis XIV was more an autocrat than ever. After the death of Louvois in 1691 men of a lower stamp even than he, who had been so much lower than Colbert, became the agents of the Crown. Pontchartrain, Chamillart, and Desmarets were men of little ability and no political ideals. Ability and idealism were indeed rigidly excluded from Louis XIV's councils, not because they did not exist but because it did not please the King to employ them. Vauban and Boisguillebert, the fore-runners of later economists (the former in his "*Projet d'une dîme royale*," and the latter in his "*Détail de la France*" and "*Factum de la France*"), brought real knowledge and sound judgment to the solution of the financial and economic problem. Vauban in his "*Projet d'une dîme royale*," having proved the fatal irregularity of the existing system of taxation (which according to his calculation left "one-tenth of the population beggars, five-tenths next door to beggars, three-tenths *fort malaisés* and one-tenth in comparative comfort, of whom not more than 10,000 were in really easy circumstances"),¹ proposed to place a tax on all land and a graduated income tax on all incomes; to equalize the incidence of the *gabelle*, and to do away with the system of internal *douanes*. The result of this system would be, he argued, that everything in the country that brought in revenue would be taxed proportionably; "the sole means of drawing large sums from a country without ruining it, as every one will agree who is not either stupid or wholly malintentioned" (a nasty thrust at Louis).² Vauban

¹ Vauban, "*Projet d'une dîme royale*," in "*Économistes financiers du XVIII^e Siècle*," op. cit. p. 34.

² "*The taille*," says Vauban (op. cit. 51), "is one cause of misery, not because the sum levied is too great but because it is arbitrary." Vauban took the *généralité* of Vézelay as an illustration. The *taille* had reduced three-quarters of the inhabitants to black bread. The *dîme* he said would end this and at the same time yield 3000 *livres* more for the exchequer (cf. Vauban, op. cit. p. 113).

Vauban gave the following list of exemptions from the *taille*: (1) Royal lands, (2) Lands of Ministers and Secretaries of State, (3) King's household, (4) First order of clergy, (5) The Orders of Chivalry, (6) The noblesse, (7) The great *Officiers de Robe*, (8) The *baillis*, *sénéchals*, and

pointed to the ease with which the ecclesiastical tithe was paid to show how smoothly his system would work. It is impossible to deny or question the truth of his arguments. But he never had an opportunity for carrying them into practice. The King indeed cynically accepted his advice to the extent of imposing the new tax, while retaining all the old ones. His book was suppressed and the disgrace hastened his death. He was the greatest of all military engineers, but his economic may be said to rank as high as his military intelligence. It was unfortunate that he should not have had an opportunity to serve his country on the economic field as he had served her on the field of battle.

Boisguillebert, a man otherwise of little distinction, in his two works took very much the same line as Vauban, but his criticism of the existing system is if anything even more scathing. He put down the diminution in the national revenue at 500,000,000 in thirty years, and the decrease in industrial revenue since 1660 at one-half. He averred that although France was richer than ever yet the greater number were in extreme indigence.¹ "Never," he says, "were lands so ill cultivated or goods so ill sold, because foreign demand has been destroyed and the home demand much diminished by personal interests." This cessation of demand he attributes, like Vauban, to the uncertainty of the *taille* which has no principle "save that of being paid higher the poorer you are ; so that a man with 4000 or 5000 *livres* of *rentes* may pay only ten or twelve crowns, while another man in the same parish with 300 or 400 *livres* of *fermage* may pay 100 crowns".² The least oppressive part of the *taille* was the sum that actually came to the King, and it ruined not only those who paid but those who were exempt, because they suffered from the general ruin of the country. In equally scathing terms he exposes the vices of

subordinate royal officials, (9) The *intendants* and their subordinates, (10) The collectors and officers of the *Élections*, (11) Governors of provinces and their staffs, (12) Officers on active service, (13) Lieutenants of provinces and governors of towns, (14) Mayors, syndics, and their protégés, (15) Free lands and noble lands in *pays d'état*, *villes franches*, etc., (16) *Fermiers*, (17) Persons who have bought themselves out.

¹ "Économistes financiers," op. cit. 177.

² *Ibid.* 181.

the *aides* and the internal *douanes*. Like Vauban his cure was equality before the tax-collector and internal free trade: like Vauban, too, he fell into disgrace, his books were condemned and he himself exiled. It was clear that during the old King's lifetime all hope of financial amendment and economic reform must be abandoned. This was all the more to be regretted because, as both Vauban and Boisguillebert had pointed out, the reforms would not have diminished but rather increased the royal revenues.

But Louis, always obstinate, was now also old. And his closing years were clouded with domestic calamities so great that they bade fair to overthrow all his political schemes. The story of the private life of his court has been so often told and is so unattractive that it may perhaps be dealt with in few words. Louis had never cared for Maria Theresa, to marry whom he had been torn from the arms of his first love. His extra-conjugal *amours* soon began, and the Queen had on the whole accepted the situation with a good grace. The first and pleasantest of those on whom the royal favours fell was Mademoiselle de la Vallière, for whom Louis conceived an attachment in 1661, when he was at an age in which romance cannot be wholly divorced from love. To her he had remained "faithful" for six years, when he met at her house the wife of the Marquis de Montespan, and conceived an attachment for her. At first he retained the old mistress beside the new, but in 1674 la Vallière, who had really cared for the King, retired to a convent. His relations with Madame de Montespan continued for nine or ten years and many children were born: in all Louis had eleven illegitimate children who lived on relations of intimacy and equality with his six legitimate children. Many minor *amours* lent variety to the life he led with Madame de Montespan. The hold Louis had over his contemporaries, and the astonishing way in which he could make them accept him at a valuation different to that by which common men are judged, is proved by the tolerant connivance of the Court, the Ministers, the Church itself in this harem life. It was Louis himself, unmoved by outward influences, who put an end to it. In 1679 he fell under the influence of

the maturer charms of Madame Scarron, the governess of the Montespan children. A widow, three years older than himself, Madame Scarron was a lady of sincere piety. She was a granddaughter of the famous Huguenot, Agrippa d'Aubigné, and had all the fervour of a convert. It was by her influence that the King abandoned his loose life. Madame Scarron was made Marquise de Maintenon, supplanted Madame de Montespan, and on the death of the Queen the King married her and remained faithful to her for the rest of his days; she had considerable influence over his policy during the whole of his later years.¹

Louis XIV had had but one son by Maria Theresa, but this son had had three sons, whose existence seemed to secure the dynasty. Suddenly a series of disasters fell upon the royal family. The Dauphin died in 1711, and in 1712 small-pox carried off his eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, together with the wife of the latter and the elder of his two small sons. The third of Louis' grandsons died in 1714. Philip was excluded by reason of his acceptance of Spain, and there remained but one feeble life in the legitimate male line. Even if the two-year-old Louis lived, Orleans, the son of the King's brother, was assured of a long regency. Orleans, therefore, sprang to an unexpected importance during the last days of the reign. He was a man of considerable intelligence, but the prospect of his rule was distasteful to Louis, not so much because he was an evil liver as because he was an avowed free-thinker. The King tried to secure the real power of the impending regency for the Duke of Maine, his illegitimate son by Madame de Montespan. But the future was ill-secured when Louis felt his end approaching. He met the inevitable with courage: as Voltaire says: "Those who have many witnesses of their death always die courageously". Historians have been found to sneer at the advice which he tendered to his five-year-old great-grandson on his deathbed. But it is more generous to believe it to have been heart-felt. He told the child to

¹ At first the court thought that the King would soon tire of Madame de Maintenon, and—punning on her name—called her "*Madame de Maintenant*".

remember always that he had obligations to God: to try and preserve peace: "J'ai trop aimé la guerre". There is both truth and regret in the avowal, and also in the acknowledgment that he had been too extravagant. "Take advice" is curious counsel from the arch-despot. He ended with the words: "Relieve your people as soon as you can, and do that which I have had the misfortune to be unable to do myself". These were noble words. Would that the reign had been as full of noble deeds.

On 1 September, 1715, the great King passed away. He had lived seventy-seven years, reigned seventy-two, and governed fifty-four. When his father died, "Charles I . . . was yet on the throne of England, though he was fast descending the slippery and fatal incline which led him . . . to the scaffold; when, in 1715, Louis resigned the reins of power to the hands of his feeble grandson, the first Hanoverian George was ruling at Saint James'".¹ Contemporary judgment was favourable to the *Roi Soleil*. Voltaire, who was not blind to his faults, was able to give the balance in his favour. "A good father, a good master, always decent in public, laborious in the cabinet, precise in business, thinking rightly, speaking well, and amiable with dignity." And in another passage the same writer makes the following shrewd comment: "A prince who, having done as great things as he, remained simple and modest would have been the first of Kings and Louis XIV the second".² Unfortunately it is possible for a king to be a good

¹ Kitchin, "History of France" (1899), III. 143.

² Compare d'Argenson's criticism of the reign: "Le meilleur roi sera celui qui aura plus de peuple et moins de *cour*. Qu'on juge sur cela Louis XIV, à qui la flatterie a donné le nom de Grand: il l'était par son orgueil, mais non par ses bienfaits en faveur de la nation. Il nous a rendus redoutés en nous rendant moins redoutables; il fonda pour ainsi dire *la cour* en lui bâtissant une capitale particulière" . . . (Darius not Alexander) . . . "à mesure de l'augmentation de la cour, nos deux rois . . . ont vu l'abondance s'éteindre dans les provinces, les mœurs se corrompre, le luxe appauvrir la nation, nos armées moins bien commandées, la justice moins bien administrée et les finances embarrassées" (d'Argenson, "Journal et Mémoires," ed. Société de l'Histoire de France, IV. 155, 156). Cp. also the interesting passage in Sterne's "Tristram Shandy" (ed. 1832), pp. 42, 43: "Why are there so few palaces and gentlemen's seats, he would say, throughout so many de-

father and master, to be businesslike, amiable, and even decent in public and yet to be a scourge and disaster to his country. The verdict of posterity has not been able to concur with that of Voltaire. It is unpleasant to end the story of a reign in many ways so brilliant on a derogatory note, but it would be false not to do so. A harsher critic says of Louis: "It would be easy to find tyrants more violent, more malignant, more odious, but there was not one who ever used his power to inflict greater suffering or greater wrong: and the admiration with which he inspired the most illustrious men of his time denotes the lowest depths to which the turpitude of absolutism has ever degraded the conscience of Europe". These are hard words: yet it is difficult to reflect on the reign of Louis XIV without feeling that they provide a truer judgment on the reign than the lenient verdict of Voltaire.

licious provinces in France? Whence is it that the few remaining châteaux amongst them are so dismantled, so unfurnished, and in so ruinous and desolate a condition?—"Because, Sir," he would say, "in that kingdom no man has any country interest to support; the little interest of any kind which any man has anywhere in it, is concentrated in the Court, and the looks of the *Grand Monarque*; by the sunshine of whose countenance or the clouds which pass across it, every Frenchman lives or dies."

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CHAPTER XXVI

THE REGENCY

(1715-1723)

THE death of Louis XIV was the signal for a reaction against the spirit which had prevailed during his long reign. Not in France only but all over Europe the bonds with which he had shackled society were relaxed. From the era of convention we are plunged suddenly into the era of libertinism. The period of the regency is the apotheosis of adventurers: the Regent himself, with his strange combination of levity and humanity, vice and virtue; Dubois, with his craving for the novel and the singular; John Law, perhaps the most remarkable of all adventurers. It was also an age of upstarts: Alberoni, son of a market gardener; Law, of an Edinburgh goldsmith; Dubois, of an apothecary; and all the time the prominence of the Stuart claimants gave an atmosphere of uncertainty and romance to the politics of Western Europe. Finally it was an age of speculation: new forces in finance were being dimly recognized and, in feeling after less antiquated methods, whole nations were carried away by the craze for speculation. In England it was the South-Sea Bubble; in France the Mississippi Scheme. Even staid Holland had its touch of the complaint. The discovery of credit in fact was like the discovery of electricity. Men realized that they were in possession of a new force; but they had yet to discover the limits of its use and the powers by which it could be controlled.

In all this we may trace a reaction against the restraints which had been imposed on society by the *Grand Monarque* whose influence had penetrated far outside the boundaries of France. For the moment Europe was mad in the excitement of its release. But the reaction was no more than skin deep.

It penetrated far enough to do a good deal of harm and not far enough to do much good. Men had been for so long accustomed to regard themselves as automatons worked by the hand of the King that they had lost the power of independent action, and the attempt (which for a moment was actually made) to broaden the foundations of government under the Regency, by recalling the nobles to a voice in the councils of the nation and restoring to the *Parlement* its long-forfeited right of remonstrance, was foredoomed to failure.

Three persons were chiefly interested in the question of the regency : Philip of Spain, who was the nearest relation of the young King, but who had resigned his claim on the regency when he had accepted the crown of Spain ; the Duke of Maine, illegitimate and favourite son of Louis XIV, who by that monarch's will had been entrusted with the education of the young King ; and the Duke of Orleans, who was undoubtedly the rightful claimant of the regency.¹ Even Louis XIV, who profoundly distrusted his nephew, had not attempted to dispute his right and had confined his efforts to limiting the powers of the regency. With this object he had in his will not only appointed Maine guardian of the young King, but had also nominated a council which should decide all questions of State and in which Orleans, though he was to be head of it, would only have one vote. This attempt to put the regency in commission was completely unsuccessful. The *Parlement* was summoned, Orleans was declared Regent, and all the restrictions embodied in the will were rescinded. Voltaire was present on the occasion, and maintains that there was no compulsion but that the *Parlement* acted of its own free will.²

Philip of Orleans, who in the capacity of Regent was absolute ruler of France for a period of eight years, was a very remarkable man. In personal appearance he bore a strong resemblance to his great-grandfather, Henry IV, which was emphasized when he wore a ruff, as he sometimes did. In character and aspirations he also resembled that monarch, but unfortunately more so in his weaknesses than in his strength.

¹ See Table, p. 208.

² Voltaire, "Œuvres," op. cit. xv. 153-4 note.

Both were debauchees ; but the licentiousness of Orleans was of a lower and more shameless type : both were tinged with scepticism in religion ; but Orleans' scepticism had made him a complete free-thinker, and he had a gibe against religion ever ready on his lips. Both were sincere in their desire to benefit their people ; but Orleans' character was so weakened by selfish excess¹ and the passion for pleasures and novelties that he lost the power to effect the good after which he aspired. He is in fact one of those double characters of which human nature is so prodigal in which vice, while unable utterly to choke good intentions, deprives its victims of the power to give effect to them. Thus it was that he weakly abandoned the policy of toleration ; and thus in his desire to attain a royal road to financial solvency he allowed himself to follow Law's schemes beyond the bounds of all prudence. Of the Regent's private life the less said the better. The age was one of licence : but the orgies of the *palais royal* were too gross even for eighteenth century taste. Public opinion, however, accepted without much protest what it had long learnt to tolerate. It is more surprising that it should not have protested against Orleans' undisguised atheism. That France should accept without protest an unbeliever in the capacity of Regent is significant, and indicates a great change of feeling.

There is no question that the Regent really desired to ameliorate the condition of the country, and to introduce a policy of peace, retrenchment, and reform. To begin with the last : he immediately appointed six councils of ten to control the main departments of the Executive and every member of these councils was selected from the ranks of the *noblesse*. When we remember how carefully the *noblesse* had been excluded from the councils of the late King this reform amounts to a revolution. It was, however, a failure. Excluded for so long from all administrative posts, the nobles had lost the taste and the capacity for affairs. It was too late now to do what Louis XIV should have

¹ Barbier, "Journal du roi Louis XV" (ed. Société de l'histoire de France, 1847-56), 1. 193, reproaches him with avarice and untrustworthiness.

done fifty years before: but the fault was that of Louis not that of Orleans. To the *Parlement* also Orleans restored its functions of remonstrance and the registration of edicts. The *Parlement* had still some capacity for independent action; but even that was no more than the shadow of what it had been in the days of Louis XIV's minority. When it opposed the wilder extravagances of Law it did so in a somewhat captious and reactionary spirit, and it is difficult to blame the Regent for overriding and exiling it. The important point is that it accepted its defeat with resignation, and even submitted calmly to the arrest and deportation of its leaders.¹

Retrenchment was the next matter. In that direction the capacity of the Regent was destined to be taxed to the utmost. It would be useless to recapitulate the story of the dilapidations of the reign of Louis XIV. Orleans inherited a depleted treasury and a large annual deficit. The condition of the finances could hardly have been worse. Orleans started well. He cut down the bloated armies; he also, with less foresight, cut down the navy and so completed the destruction of Colbert's fleet. He established a *chambre ardente* to investigate the peculations of the officials, with the idea of making them disgorge some of their ill-gotten gains. Its proceedings were marked by so much harshness, and so many people were involved that it very soon disappeared before the popular resentment which it aroused. The State debt was reduced and consolidated, the 600,000,000 *livres* of existing liabilities being converted into 250,000,000 of *billets d'état*, and the rate of interest being simultaneously lowered. This was of course equivalent to a bankruptcy of more than 50 per cent and as such was deplored by the Regent. The expenses of government were also reduced, and a reduction in taxation was effected. It is, however, a significant fact that the first tax to be reduced was the only one which had any appearance of justice. The *capitation*, which had been imposed to meet the expenses of the Spanish Succession War, fell on all classes alike and aroused such bitter protests from the only class which had any voice with which to protest—to wit the upper and

¹ See Barbier, op. cit. I. 14.

privileged class—that it was repealed. Finally the coinage was once more debased; the *marc d'or* which had stood at twenty-eight *livres* at the close of the reign of Louis XIV was raised to forty *livres*, and later (by Law) to sixty *livres*. This proceeding was not recognized as incorrect in the days when money was still regarded as a simple counter, which the King could fix at any value that was convenient to him. To debase the coinage was not yet to break any financial canon: but it was so great a practical inconvenience and interfered so much with public confidence and trade that a wise ruler ought to have seen the folly of resorting to it. Probably Orleans only did so when he was at his wits' end, as the man might well be who had to foot the bill of the *Grand Monarque*. The deficit in spite of all these measures remained, and it was to meet it and to revive the financial fortunes of France that the Regent adopted the advice and scheme presented to him by that astute Scot John Law, of whom we shall shortly have to speak.

Reform and retrenchment were essential to the Regent's policy. So also and in even greater degree was peace. Another war would have completed the ruin which the wars of Louis XIV had begun. Orleans found himself confronted by the bitter enmity of Philip of Spain, who in spite of treaty obligations still aspired not only to the regency but also to the reversion of the crown of France in the event of Louis XV's death without heirs. A deadly struggle for this reversion between Philip V and the Regent was therefore inevitable. The Pyrenees, whose disappearance had been acclaimed so pompously by Louis XIV reappeared, as formidable a barrier as ever, before that monarch was cold in his grave. The Regent therefore had to checkmate the policy of Spain. Spain had been raised by the able administration of Alberoni from the inferior position she had occupied, and was already a menace to the maintenance of the Treaty of Utrecht. That treaty was all-important to France, and Orleans nerved himself to a great effort to avert the danger. He was fortunate in the co-operation of a really able minister. The Abbé (afterwards Cardinal), Dubois, has been roughly handled by history. He had been the tutor of Orleans and must therefore presumably share the blame for the grievous

vices of his pupil. If so he may also reasonably be credited with some share in that pupil's undoubted virtues. That he was a regular pander to the orgies of Orleans has never been proved, though it has been repeatedly asserted. The vitriolic St. Simon was the Abbé's special enemy, and it is from him that historians have faithfully copied the lists of his outrageous vices. He was probably no better than his age: a worldling no doubt, and a parvenu, which was much more discreditable in St. Simon's eyes: violent and ill-tempered¹ he was still a bold diplomatist and was not afraid of novelties: never a very popular characteristic. Under the guidance of these two enlightened libertines, Orleans and Dubois, France entered on the remarkable period of eight years known as the Regency. It is possible and has been popular to denounce their policy as treacherous and shameful to France. That is a matter of opinion. And it may be urged on the other hand that by abandoning the fetish of the Spanish *entente*, which had brought nothing but ill to France in the past and was destined, in the form of the "Family Compact," to bring her nothing but ill in the future, they broke antiquated idols and saved their country from a disastrous war.

The move by which Orleans and his minister hoped to checkmate Spain was no less than a *rapprochement* with England. The family interest of the house of Hanover and that of the house of Orleans were very similar. Both houses desired to thwart the ambitions of a claimant: and it was obviously to the interests of both that each should agree to throw over the claimant who threatened the other, that Orleans should abandon the Stuarts and George repudiate Philip of Spain. England had already made overtures, but Orleans was extremely reluctant to sacrifice the ill-fated Stuarts. After the failure of the abortive rising in Scotland in 1715, England had less and France more incentive to come to terms with the other power. Orleans, however, was still

¹ Barbier paints him as a violent, reckless man, Voltaire as a man "of some spirit, much depravity," and above all with his master's taste for singularity (Barbier, *op. cit.* i. 21; Voltaire, "*Œuvres*," *op. cit.* xv. 469).

halting between two opinions, and James III was still at Avignon when Dubois' influence brought him to a decision. The Abbé went to Hanover and had interviews with the King of England. These ended (on 4 January, 1717) in the conclusion of the Triple Alliance between England, France, and Holland. This alliance confirmed the Treaty of Utrecht: James III was to be expelled from Avignon; the Hanoverian line was acknowledged in England, and that of Orleans in France in the event of the childless death of Louis XV. The works of Mardick were to be destroyed. This treaty has been fiercely denounced by French historians. It is condemned as the one really ignominious and treasonable treaty signed by France during the Bourbon period, and it has been asserted that that country, rather than destroy the works at Mardick, should have fought for them to the last drop of her blood. But what was the alternative? Inevitable and almost certainly disastrous war, just at the moment when a period of recuperation was of the last importance to the country. The union of the crowns of France and Spain which was adumbrated was the very thing that Europe had so carefully guarded against in the terms of the Peace of Utrecht, and if it was effected it would bring the whole of Europe about the ears of France. It is all very well to say that the exclusion of Philip of Spain was the personal interest of Orleans, but it was also most certainly the interest of France. The Regent may have, in the Triple Alliance, secured his personal interest, but it is absurd to assume that in doing so he necessarily sacrificed the national interest. The most that can be said then is that he broke with tradition; but France had found before, and was to find again in the War of the Austrian Succession, that there was little profit or credit in blind adherence to tradition.

Spain was completely checkmated by this move and, when in 1717 she laid hands on Sardinia and proceeded in the following year to attack Sicily, she flung the Emperor into the arms of the Triple Alliance, which was thus converted into the Quadruple Alliance (2 August, 1718). The four allies immediately laid down their terms. The Emperor was to

abandon his claim on Spain and the Indies, and the King of Spain his on Italy and the Netherlands. Sardinia was to be exchanged for Sicily, Savoy receiving Sardinia and the Emperor Sicily. Parma and Tuscany were to be secured for the children of Philip V by his second wife Elizabeth Farnese. The annihilation of the Spanish fleet by the English under Byng at Cape Passaro (11 August, 1718) ensured the acceptance of these terms. Alberoni plunged wildly, strove to raise a rebellion in Hungary, schemed for a Stuart restoration in England, and endeavoured to embarrass the French Government by fomenting a rising in Brittany (December, 1718, the Cellamare plot). Dubois discovered the plot by means of a somewhat discreditable intrigue. France then sent an army to ravage Spain, and Berwick threatened Madrid. Thus, as Voltaire says, "the first war of Louis XV was against his uncle whom Louis XIV had established at such cost; was in fact civil war". But civil war is sometimes the lesser of two evils.

The English fleet meanwhile ravaged the coasts while Austria drove the Spaniards from Italy. Alberoni was defeated; his grand schemes had come to nothing; and they had to a great extent been defeated by the ingenuity and elasticity of Orleans and Dubois, who had been clear-sighted enough to see that the maintenance of the fundamental clauses of the Peace of Utrecht would be cheaply purchased by a temporary union with traditional enemies. Philip V accepted the terms dictated by the allies; Alberoni was dismissed; Austria took possession of Sicily and Savoy of Sardinia. The first attempt to overthrow the Peace of Utrecht had failed. That the alliance with the sea powers was a temporary expedient was soon proved, however, by the conclusion in 1721 of a treaty between France and Spain, by which it was agreed that Louis XV should marry the Infanta, while a daughter of Orleans was to marry the eldest son of Philip V.¹ The Infanta was brought to Paris and betrothed to the young King, who presented her with a doll which cost 20,000 *livres*. The poor child remained in Paris until April,

¹ See Barbier, *op. cit.* I. 105.

1725, when the idea of the marriage was abandoned and she was bundled back to Spain.

In these ways the Regent had secured to France the blessings of peace together with a remarkable advance in retrenchment and reform. But he was not only a "liberal" in politics but also an advanced advocate of freedom in every sphere. He relaxed the stringent regulations which had oppressed literature, and under his benignant influence Fénélon's suppressed work, "*Télémaque*," was published, and Voltaire, then a man of twenty-one, commenced his wonderful literary career. Still more significant was the attitude of the Regent towards religious questions. A free-thinker himself, he was no friend of intolerance. The closing years of the reign of Louis XIV had witnessed the triumph of Jesuitism—supported by King and Pope—over Jansenism. In 1705 Clement X had issued the bull *Vincam Dominus Sabaoth*, which was actually edited by Louis himself. This bull was a sweeping condemnation of Jansenism and had been followed by the suppression of the monastery of Port-Royal (1709). The Jesuits enjoyed a further triumph when in 1713 the bull *Unigenitus* was issued, condemning Quesnel's "*Reflexions morales sur le nouveau testament*". With the death of Louis XIV the successes of the Jesuits ended. The Regent deplored the persecution of the Jansenists and the endeavour to force the bull *Unigenitus* upon an unwilling nation. He threw himself on to the Jansenist side and appointed Noailles, the most prominent Jansenist in the kingdom, president of his "Council of Conscience". This was an immensely popular move. For France was Jansenist, or rather Gallican, to the core (the two terms were by this time practically interchangeable). The white, yellow, and red favours of that party entirely dominated the black and red favours of the "Constitutionists".¹ In the words of Voltaire: "The acceptants were a hundred Bishops together with the Jesuit and Capucin orders, the recusants fifteen Bishops and—all the nation".² Orleans, however, was not at home in religious matters, as

¹ See Buvat, "*Journal de la Régence*" (1865), I. 234.

² "Teach the Jesuits in Paris and Rome to talk French," said St. Simon.

he said *la prétraille l'embarassa*, and he seems to have misjudged the trend of public opinion in France. One night at the opera he spent the whole evening talking over the question with St. Simon in the royal box, and was genuinely surprised when the latter assured him that the recusants were the bulk of the nation in quality and quantity. Meanwhile, however, the alarm caused by the Cellamare plot together with the aspirations of Dubois for the hat of a Cardinal inclined the Regent to reconcile himself with Rome and to enter into more friendly relations with the Jesuits.¹ He, therefore, reversed his former policy and sought means for procuring the acceptance of the bull. The episode of Law, some account of which must now be given, substituted for a time the passion of cupidity for that of religious bigotry, but it is doubtful if the failure of Law's scheme contributed as much to the unpopularity of Orleans as the *volte face* which he had made in his attitude towards the religious question.

The perilous condition of the finances remained the cloud on the horizon, and the Regent gave much consideration to the question of possible remedies for what was a very serious state of affairs. Looking about in his feverish way for means of financial salvation he recalled the appearance in his apartments, while he was still a Prince of the Blood, of a handsome, well-dressed young Scot who had astonished the assembled *roués* by his brilliant talk and his singular good fortune at the tables. This young man was John Law, the son of a prosperous Edinburgh goldsmith.² An exile from Scotland, he had wandered over Europe and become familiar with the financial affairs of most of the great trade centres; especially he had studied the English and Amsterdam Banks.

The political economy of that time was based on tradition and practical experience. It was held, as is well illustrated

¹ Buvat, op. cit. I. 338-344.

² Not such a goldsmith as we know, but such an one as Scott has drawn in the "Jingling Geordie" of "The Fortunes of Nigel". Law's father had become a laird by the purchase of the estate of Lauriston on the outskirts of Edinburgh. On his mother's side he claimed descent from the house of Argyll; and was also descended from an Archbishop of Glasgow.

by the Mercantile System, that for individuals as for states in their commercial dealings the end to be arrived at was the acquisition of precious metals. Law was essentially a theorist and far in advance of his times: he realized that money was only a means to an end and that the true object was to increase the facilities for exchange. "Wealth," he wrote, "depends on commerce, and commerce depends on circulation." This was sound political economy; the next problem was how to improve the appliances for the exchange of values and thereby oil the wheels of commerce. The answer was, of course, Credit, the system which distinguishes us from the naked savage who barter his hides for fruit. It is the corner-stone of our commercial relations to-day, but was imperfectly appreciated at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Law proposed to develop it to the utmost. Restrictions on exchange must be swept away; he derided the attempts of his contemporaries to prevent the export of gold and to fix the rate of interest. Facilities for exchange must be increased, and here a further reform occurred to him. He saw—and the difficulty has disturbed economists more profound than Law—that the precious metals, fluctuating as they did in accordance with the state of supply and demand, were not an ideal currency. They were the less so because at that time, by a grave misconception, they were, as we have seen, still regarded as arbitrary tokens, which the King could raise or lower at will. There was, therefore, much to be said for Law's proposal to supersede gold, or at least reinforce it and thereby extend his system of credit, by the issue of a paper currency.¹ In these respects he anticipated many now accepted doctrines, but like other pioneers though he was on the right road he followed it too far. He misjudged the functions of credit, overstrained its powers, and learnt—as so many others have learnt—that a system based exclusively on credit collapses when fear begins.

Orleans had a fellow-feeling with a man who was a gambler, and he determined to give Law a chance of rousing France from a period of commercial stagnation. On 2 May, 1716, he

¹ Paper, he declared, was a medium as superior to gold as that metal was to copper.

was given permission to open a private bank in Paris, which received deposits, discounted commercial paper, and issued bills which should always be redeemable in cash. Under these regulations the bank was a great boon to commerce, and had Law stopped there he would have performed a most useful service to France in introducing her to the power of credit.¹ At the end of 1718 the bank was converted into a State bank. But wrong conclusions had been drawn from its early success. All limitations on the issue of bills were withdrawn. By 22 April, 1719, banknotes to the amount of 71,000,000 *livres* had been fabricated.

Still the first effect of the bank, as Law had foreseen, was to stimulate commerce, and he at once prepared to show how advantage could be taken of the increased facilities. The machinery was ready, work must be found for it. In October, 1717, he had become the concessionary of Louisiana and had floated a company (called the *Compagnie d'Occident*) for the development of that colony. This company at once struck up intimate relations with the State, acquired the tobacco monopoly in 1718 (4 September) for 2,020,000 *livres* and in May, 1719, took over the *Compagnie de Sénégal* for the exploitation of all French interests in Asia and Africa, and became the *Compagnie des Indes*. The rivalry of the four brothers Pâris, men who like Law had a natural genius for finance, but combined it with more balance than Law could boast of, pushed the ardent Scot to further efforts.² On 25 July, 1719, he acquired for the company for a sum of 50,000,000 the sole right of coinage. Finally, on 27 August, 1719, in return for a

¹ Much more questionable was Law's interference with the currency. He raised the *marc d'or* (which had stood at 28 *livres* at the close of the last reign and which the Regent had raised to 40) to 60 *livres*. This was all the more discreditable in that Law was quite alive to the evils of the process and had himself loudly protested against it. The *Parlement* raised its voice against this proceeding, and revived an ancient veto on the interference of foreigners in finance. The Regent registered the edict in a *lit de justice*, the leaders of the opposition were exiled, and the *Parlement* relapsed into silence (Barbier, op. cit. I. 9 *sqq.*).

² The Pârises produced an anti-system which paid 12 to 15 per cent interest on unimpeachable security. Barbier (I. 9 *sqq.*) suggests that the Pârises were deliberately put up by d'Argenson to ruin Law's scheme.

lease of the farms of all the taxes of the kingdom, he arranged for the company to advance the Crown 1,500,000,000 at 3 per cent, to pay off part of the public debt and the *rentes*, and to redeem some of the "offices". To do all this money was required. The original capital of the *Compagnie d'Occident* had been 100,000,000 *livres*, but it consisted largely of what is known in financial circles as "water". The shares were in fact paid for by Government obligations (*billets d'état*), which stood at a discount of 60 per cent, and were not likely to be redeemed. Thus the real capital available for the great enterprise was represented by the annual interest paid by the Government on these obligations. In May, 1719, there was a further issue of 25,000,000 (known as the *filles*), in July another of the same amount, and in August one of 1,500,000,000 (known as the *petites filles*), all at premiums varying from 50 *livres* to 4500 *livres* on the 500 *livres* share. The total capital had then reached the enormous sum of 1,650,000,000 *livres*.

Considering that the whole was a wild speculation, and that little was done to really develop the districts conceded, and that neither the tobacco monopoly, the privilege of coinage, nor the lease of the *fermes générales* was acquired at a particularly favourable figure, the success of Law in placing this vast number of shares is astounding. He had only been able to do it by assiduous puffing and "window-dressing". During the first year the shares had been at a discount; but in the spring of 1719 Law had resorted to something in the nature of a "put option," a device familiar to modern financiers but quite unknown at that period. In effect it meant that the manager of the company was prepared to stake a substantial sum on the shares rising to *par*, and the demand increased accordingly. In July he declared a dividend of 12 per cent payable on 1 January, 1720. He also purchased a reservation in Arkansas and sent out a number of colonists; other tracts were also settled and the development of the colonies was begun. All this was done with a wealth of advertisement. A city was founded with the title of New Orleans. Vagabonds and unemployed, and the sheddings of hospitals and prisons, were shipped off to America. On 18 September, 1719, 180 gaol-

birds were married with the greatest publicity to 180 women of the class which alone would provide material for such an operation : thirty cartloads of "girls of moderate virtue" were driven about the town prior to their departure. A number of Indians were brought to Paris and gave exhibitions of dancing and hunting. Their princess espoused a serjeant of the line. By such expedients an enthusiasm was created out of all proportion to the work actually accomplished in the colonies. The wildest tales gained credence of the immense wealth of the Indies. An expedition actually sailed with the express object of finding an emerald rock of untold value which was said to exist on the Arkansas River.

By methods such as these the prospects of the company were magnified beyond all bounds. This would not be surprising when we remember that even at the end of the sober nineteenth century the shares in a somewhat similar company, which had never paid a dividend, rose to seven times their face value. In July, 1719, the 500 *livre* share was at 1000. By August it was at 5000. By the end of November it was at 18,000-20,000 *livres* or about thirty-six times its face value. The public completely lost their heads. Immense fortunes were made in brief moments by obscure persons, many of whom did not know whether the Mississippi was an island or a river. The Rue Quincampoix (now one of the narrowest, dirtiest, and quaintest streets in Paris) was the market for the shares. It was completely blocked from morning to night with frenzied speculators ; its very cellars hummed with excitement ; Law ("Lass" as he was called)¹ became an idol ; he was made Controller-General, turning Catholic for the purpose ; he received the freedom of the city of Edinburgh and became in four years, as Voltaire says, "from a Scot a Frenchman, from a Protestant a Catholic, from an adventurer lord of the finest lands in the kingdom, from a banker a minister of State".²

¹ Barbier, op. cit. i. 5. His nicknames in England had been "Beau Law" and "Jessamy John"; from "lass," the wags said, he degenerated to "Hélas".

² Voltaire, op. cit. xv. 165. Voltaire adds that he had seen him arrive at the Palais Royal followed by dukes and peers, marshals of France and bishops.

He went in person to the Rue Quincampoix to enjoy the scene and, as he surveyed the animated spectacle from a window draped with velvet, little Savoyard *gamins* from below cried to him: "*Monseigneur*, give us a *pourboire*; we will make your shares go up". Though he was uneasy at the extent of the boom,¹ he enjoyed his popularity, was profuse in his generosity, and, being undoubtedly convinced of the soundness of his principles and his capacity to pull the thing through, himself invested his entire fortune in the *Compagnie*.

The history of the downfall of the system is that of almost every modern financial crisis—a boom followed by a slump. All through the autumn the bulls bought, and paid—in paper. In December the bears began. Sagacious shareholders began to take profits, and to convert them whenever possible into specie. The reaction was enormously increased by the effect of the paper currency so recklessly issued by the bank. In vain Law attempted to check the panic. Speculation of this kind may be compared to a river; the manipulators can direct it to some extent, but they are powerless to stay its course. The desperate measures adopted by Law and the Government were useless. By a series of wild edicts the value of the shares was fixed, specie was proscribed and the precious metals completely demonetized (11 March), the bank and the company were amalgamated, and the value of money lowered, but all to no purpose. The company's shares and the bank's paper fell together. The *Parlement* protested against the "May Edict" which had fixed the price of the 500 *livre* share at 5000 *livres* and got it revoked.² The prohibitions on the precious metals were withdrawn in June, and every one was allowed to have as much money as he liked, a permission which, as men remarked, came when scarcely anyone had any left. It only remained to liquidate the system. Law stayed in Paris to the end of the year facing insults and reproaches with courage.³ The price of all commodities had risen to famine height, and much anger was vented against

¹ Barbier, *op. cit.* i. 24-5.

² The edict was passed against Law's advice (Barbier, *op. cit.* i. 27).

³ Barbier, *op. cit.* i. 65 and 67.

Orleans and his protégé.¹ In December he left France with no more than 800 *louis* in his pocket.²

It is a remarkable proof of the popularity of the Orleans-Dubois government that even a catastrophe such as the collapse of the Mississippi Scheme provoked comparatively little outcry. Crowds indeed penetrated into the Palais Royal and frightened Orleans "to the colour of his cravat"; Law also had been repeatedly threatened, his wife and daughter hustled, and the windows of his house broken. But the excitement soon subsided. The truth was that Orleans had by his liberal policy so bound to him all parties in the State that he could afford to make some mistakes. Jansenists, *Parlement*, *Noblesse*, literary men, were all grateful to him for his favour and toleration; it was at this crisis that he reaped the benefits of his earlier liberality. And it should not be forgotten in enumerating the evils which resulted from the Mississippi collapse that there was another side to that mishap. It gave a stimulus to trade and colonization in spite of its failure, it opened the eyes of Frenchmen to certain economic truths and taught them in the hard school of experience the limits of the functions of credit. Above all it redistributed riches,³ and in so doing

¹ There was a great rise in the value of money in August, 2 *livres 5 sols* being at 4 *livres*. At the same time prices went up with a bound. Candles were at 9 *livres* and coffee at 18 *livres* per lb. (Barbier, op. cit. i. 54-5).

² Nine years later he died in great poverty in Venice. Montesquieu, who visited him there, describes him as ever dreaming great schemes with unshaken confidence in their soundness and playing for much higher stakes than his straitened means justified. Montesquieu, in his "Lettres Persanes" (published 1721), gives a summary of the Mississippi crisis which could hardly be excelled for conciseness. "France," he says, "at the death of the late King was a body weighed down by a thousand maladies: Noailles took the knife in hand, amputated the useless members, and applied some local remedies. But there remained an internal malady to heal. A stranger appeared who undertook the cure of this; after many violent remedies, he believed that he had restored the patient's condition, but he had only really caused him to swell."

³ "All those who were rich six months ago are now in poverty and those who had not bread are gorged with riches. Never have these two extremes so nearly touched. The stranger has turned the State inside out as an old-clothes-man turns a coat: . . . what unhoped-for

gave a fresh incentive to commerce. The Regency was now drawing to a close. The Pâris brothers were recalled from the exile into which they had been driven in their rivalry with Law, and under their superintendence a *visa* of the entire wealth of every person in the kingdom was undertaken and carried out with great skill and assiduity. This *visa* was part of the programme for winding up the unfortunate scheme of Law. Enormous fines were imposed on those who had made fortunes by speculation, the *nouveaux riches* being bled to the extent of 18,700,000 *livres*. Only those of high birth escaped. Bourbon and Conti quietly pocketed immense sums and no one attempted to make them disgorge. It was the most disgraceful incident in the whole story of the Mississippi Scheme that the winding up proceeded in a manner so arbitrary and unjust.

In 1723 Louis XV reached the age of thirteen and the Regency nominally ended. Dubois became first minister of the new Government and Orleans president of the Council. Death, however, ended a rule which the majority of the King had not ended. In the same year both Dubois and Orleans died. The latter was but forty-nine, but he was worn out with debauchery. If we disregard his private life, of which we are perhaps ill-fitted to judge, it may be said that the regency of Orleans was an oasis of enlightenment between two long periods of bigotry and reaction. The verdict of contemporaries was wholly favourable. Barbier says that it is impossible not to recognize the *esprit* and penetration of the Regent and his minister,¹ and Voltaire holds that Orleans was irreproachable "save for his ardent taste for pleasures and novelties".²

fortunes, incredible even to those who have made them! God does not more quickly produce men from nothing. How many valets served by their comrades and to-morrow perhaps by their masters!" ("Lettres Persanes," ed. 1784, II. 145, 146).

¹ Barbier, *op. cit.* I. 202.

² Voltaire, *op. cit.* xv. 170.

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From this point onwards the growth of the revolutionary spirit is excellently worked out by Félix Rocquain in his "L'esprit révolutionnaire avant la Révolution, 1715-89" (1878).

CHAPTER XXVII

LOUIS XV

(1723-1774)

THE return from the house of Orleans to that of Bourbon is a descent from the distinguished to the humdrum. It is this descent rather than the much-talked-of decline in royal morals that gives the reign of Louis XV so sinister a place in history. The degradation of the King's morals as he grew to maturity was indeed great, but it was hardly more sordid than that of many of his predecessors; it would be difficult, for instance, to imagine a moral decline from the conditions prevalent at the court of the Regent.¹ Unfortunately Louis XV was as lacking in the public as in the domestic virtues. We have many references to his character in contemporary memoirs, of which the passages in the journal of d'Argenson are perhaps the most interesting. D'Argenson was an observant man and in close contact with the King, and he was pathetically anxious for the development of his character. Long after others had written Louis down as irretrievably sunk in low and selfish pleasures he clung to hopes of amendment. Eagerly clutching at the slightest straw, he notes that "the King is working, has a good memory, is without passion, is humane, just and economical, and chooses his servants well,"² the very qualities in which one is accustomed to regard Louis as deficient; at another time: "he has the good sense to care more for the affairs of State than for those of his mistress". Time after time he repeats: "the King is

¹ The fact that the King had mistresses did not shock people very much. Barbier's comment was: "Why shouldn't he? Every one has" (Barbier, *op. cit.* III. 196, 197).

² d'Argenson, *op. cit.* (1861-7), II. 170.

working, he will yet be a Henri IV, he will detach himself from his habits, he is not so idle as he has been painted". Unfortunately, while he thus magnified every shred of good, he was gradually obliged to recognize an overwhelming balance of ill. At first it is merely that "he is inclined to be idle"; then that "he won't work; will only give an hour a day to business and rises at eleven"; that "he relapses into nonchalance after every effort". Then the voice gets angry: "he lives in debauch and obscurity"; "he is a parrot"; "a trifler—*totus versatur in nugis*"'; finally with a fierce blast of impatience: "it would require Abraham's faith to believe in the King".

Unfortunately it is impossible to question the truth of d'Argenson's conclusions. Louis XV was the most unworthy of monarchs. Nevertheless he was not altogether the monster he has been painted. He had the dignity and presence of a *grand seigneur*; he had inherited some of the fighting qualities of his race, and in the battle-field at any rate was able to throw off the fearful ennui which was the bane of his life. His physical courage was never questioned; he behaved with the utmost sang-froid at Fontenoy. He was even well-affected to his people, would have liked every one to be happy, and probably wondered in his bored way why the devil they weren't. The truth about Louis' character seems to be that in his construction the usual dose of vitality had been omitted. He was constitutionally incapable of real interest or prolonged effort, and he quickly lapsed into profound listlessness and plunged into sexual debauchery simply as a relief from the ennui which he could not shake off.¹ Yet it is possible to spare a little sympathy for the man who, with no taste for pomp or affairs, found himself committed to the unmitigated pomposity and interminable etiquette which Louis XIV had planted so deep in the French court. Louis XV inherited a system which encouraged his faults of

¹ See Barbier, op. cit. III. 123. He did not care for spectacles, and ballets and gambling bored him. He liked hunting and was a creditable shot. Bernis describes how, after Rossbach, he tried to rouse the King: "j'excite un peu d'élévation dans le poulx, et puis la léthargie recommence. On ouvre les grands yeux tristes et tout est dit." Louis was the handsomest of his race. (Bernis to Choiseul, quoted by Aubertin, "l'Esprit public au XVIIIe siècle," ed. 1876, pp. 340-341.)

character and which would have overwhelmed a greater man than he. To a great extent he was the victim of the system of the *Grand Monarque*.

It is too often assumed that the catastrophe of 1789 was the consequence of a long period of degradation, oppression, and misery of which the reign of Louis XV was the culmination. And it is to this extent true that Louis' weakness of character prevented him from adhering for long to any policy or any minister, and that consequently little constitutional or social progress was made during his long reign. It is also true that his long and burdensome—and stupid and unnecessary—wars threw a crushing burden upon the country, and provoked both misery and discontent. But, the wars over, the recuperative powers of France remained what they have ever been, and a very little adjustment of the burden, a very little firmness in allocating it to the proper shoulders, should have restored the financial equilibrium. It was the failure to make these readjustments, the absence of continuous internal policy, and the repeated tergiversations of Louis XV and his successor that brought on the crisis of 1789, and not any terrible oppression or provocation. During the whole of this long period France hung in the balance between free trade and protection, toleration and persecution, Jesuitism and Jansenism, reaction and reform. We shall see how Terray's and Quesnay's work as freetraders was undone by Necker, how the expulsion of the Jesuits went hand in hand with the cruel persecution of the Protestants, how there were hopeful moments, such as the ministry of Machault, when it seemed that the Government was about to grapple with the financial problem, but how these gleams of hope quickly vanished, how above all the reform of the *Parlements*, which were far more the home of privilege than of constitutional liberty, was carried out in the last years of Louis XV only to be immediately undone by his successor. It was through this lack of continuity, this absence of driving power, far more than through any definite acts of oppression, or any definite antagonism to reform that the monarchy drifted into the terrible impasse of 1789.

On the other hand throughout the period there was a

widely recognized unrest, a sense of impending change. Reform was in the air. No one will deny that reform, political, and above all financial, was overdue, that France had a form of government and a system of taxation which she had outgrown. Even the Crown recognized this and went on recognizing it till 1789. It is a complete mistake to regard the Crown in the eighteenth century as reactionary in intention. Reaction had its home among the privileged classes, its citadel in the *Parlements*, the members of which had paid for their privileges and would not lightly abandon them.¹ Against these privileges the Crown fought: and where it was to blame was in not fighting with sufficient determination. In fact it made so bad a fight that in the end the forces of reaction triumphed and dragged the Crown down with them in the ruin which their triumph involved. This is the true explanation of the catastrophe of the monarchy.

Louis was but thirteen years old when he lost his two principal advisers, Orleans and Dubois. The post of *premier ministre* was at once claimed by the Duke of Bourbon. Bourbon was not only corrupt and dissolute but unstatesmanlike also,² and he set the reign vigorously on the down grade. In the first place, in his eagerness that the King should marry and beget heirs, he broke off the Spanish match on the ground of the youth of the Princess—she was only six years old. Search was then made for a suitable bride and in the end the choice fell on Maria Leczinska, daughter of Stanislas, ex-King of Poland. The alliance was unfortunate. Maria was a virtuous and rather plain nonentity, and her presence only served to enhance the boredom of the King.³ Moreover, she was the special protégée of the Jesuits, was promptly dubbed “Unigenita”⁴ and helped to identify the Crown with that unpopular order. Bourbon’s next mistake was even graver. He revived the foolish policy of religious intolerance, which in

¹ Barbier, op. cit. I. 393. Marais, “Journal” (1863, etc.), III. 191-4 and 197-210.

² *Ibid.* op. cit. 196: “On sait qu’il n’a pas le sens commun,” and I. 192: “M. le duc est d’un esprit très borné, ne sachant rien, n’aimant que son plaisir et la chasse”. He was the great-grandson of the great Condé.

³ d’Argenson, op. cit. III. 192.

⁴ Marais, op. cit. III. 180-190, 205.

his better moments had been discarded by the Regent,¹ and thus gave a tone of persecution and ultramontaniam to the reign, which was never shaken off. It continued even to its close in the bitter persecution of Protestants and unbelievers of which the worst instances were the cruel cases of Jean Calas and de la Barre.² Not only was this intolerance out of date and provocative, but it was wind in the sails of scepticism and gave a power to the *philosophes* and enemies of religion which they could not otherwise have acquired. To cope with the financial situation Bourbon, influenced by his mistress Madame de Prie, introduced Pâris du Verney, the most eminent of that family of financiers, into the ministry (1723-6). Pâris reduced the value of the *louis* from twenty-seven to twenty *livres*. This innovation caused much discontent, and even more was caused by the imposition of the *cinquantième* or income tax of 2 per cent (a revival in a modified form of the *dixième* which had been weakly abandoned in 1717): and it was these financial expedients that brought about Bourbon's downfall (11 June, 1726).

The King's tutor, André Hercule de Fleury (Bishop of Fréjus, afterwards Cardinal) who had his royal pupil's ear, had been instrumental in Bourbon's appointment; but, although seventy-three years old, he was anxious to secure power for himself, and now (1726), although he did not become chief minister (that office being abolished) he entered the ministry and became the principal adviser of the King. He held office for seventeen years and was thus responsible for the policy of the early years of the reign. In him the unimaginativeness and want of vitality that characterize the whole reign were matters of age and temperament. He was indeed a man of peace: and peace and a period for recuperation were just what France wanted. Unfortunately it is not always the men of peace who promote that blessing, and Fleury had many of the weaknesses that distinguish statesmen of that peculiar mould. He forgot that to secure peace it is necessary to prepare war; he neglected, as such statesmen too often neglect, to present a bold front in crisis: worse still, he to some extent

¹ *Supra*, p. 298.

² *Infra*, p. 345.

neglected the navy.¹ Thus pacific aims degenerated into weakness and peace resolved itself into war. Fleury must bear the blame for this, and also for his blindness to the importance of colonial matters ; it was he who laid the foundation of France's failure in the great colonial struggle of the eighteenth century.

Fleury's chief merit was his honesty and the soundness of his finance. For a brief moment, under the beneficent influence of peace, there was actually a surplus—a thing unheard of within the memory of man. It was Fleury too who ended the era of false money. He established the *livre tournois* at 1·02 francs (modern money) and at that figure it remained till 1785. This fixing of the value of the coinage was one of the chief causes of the commercial prosperity of the country. On the other hand he restored the *ferme générale* which had been bought up by Law, and the dilapidations of the farmers of taxes recommenced. It was calculated that in six years these cormorants profited to the tune of 24,000,000 *livres*. Fleury, through his Controller-General le Pelletier des Forts, also reduced the interest on State loans. But his most profitable financial step was the successful imposition of a *dixième* (1733, Orry being Controller-General)² which yielded between 30,000,000 and 40,000,000 *livres* annually. Attention was also bestowed on the neglected thoroughfares of the kingdom,³ and Fleury may claim to be the father of the splendid road system of France. D'Argenson gives an amusing account of the experiences of Maria Leczinska on her journey to Paris for her wedding. She was nearly drowned, poor lady, on the road, and saw little of that "solidity and magnificence"⁴ which delighted Arthur Young half a century later. The foundations of that solidity and magnificence, however, were laid during Fleury's administration, and to lay them the unpopular royal *corvée* or forced labour on the roads was reimposed and systematized. It varied from

¹ See Mahan, "Influence of Sea-power upon History" (1898), pp. 244, 249, 252, 253 ; but compare Lapeyrouse-Bonfils, "Histoire de la Marine française" (1845), II. 243.

² Le Pelletier des Forts was Comptroller, 1726-30 ; Orry, 1730-45.

³ In some parts of France it was only possible to travel on horseback.

⁴ d'Argenson, op. cit. I. 52.

eight to forty days' labour *per annum* and was certainly a severe burden. It was easier, however, as Orry said, to exact labour which men did possess than money which they did not : and the important thing was that the roads were put in order. Orry was a vigorous protectionist and commerce thrived under his administration, though there were not lacking signs that grandmotherly restrictions were getting out of date.¹ These were the palmy days of the *Compagnie des Indes*. But although Fleury's financial administration was sound and honest he was no political or administrative reformer ; no attempt was made to remedy the abuses of privilege, and compared with these abuses surplus and monetary reform were trifles.

In religious policy Fleury followed the example of violent repression set by Bourbon.² This was the more unfortunate because it had long been patent that persecution was ineffective. Jansenism had thrived under repressive measures. Public opinion backed the *curés* who rejected the bull *Unigenitus*. The royal edict of 1730, which insisted on the universal acceptance of the bull, or "Constitution" as it was called, threw the *Parlements* on to the side of the recalcitrants. Repeated scenes between the King and the magistrates ended in the resignation of 150 members of the *Parlement de Paris*. "Voilà de vrais Romains et les pères de la patrie !" people cried as the members passed out of the hall.³ Religious excitement, stimulated by repression, rose to fever heat. This was the period of miracles and convulsionists. The tomb of the famous Jansenist, Deacon Paris, in the cemetery of St. Médard, where wonderful miracles were said to be wrought, became the centre of so much sedition that the public were excluded. Whereupon a wag affixed to the gate the following lampoon :—

de par le Roi défense à Dieu
de faire miracle en ce lieu !

¹ One such sign was the strike at Lyons in 1744.

² Rocquain ("L'Esprit Révolutionnaire avant la Révolution," 1878, pp. 41-2) maintains that it was Fleury who inspired the declaration against the Protestants, and holds that it was his intolerance that made religious opposition political.

³ Barbier, *op. cit.* I. 430.

Meanwhile in the sphere of international politics the two great peace ministers, Walpole and Fleury, had brought about several new combinations. The breach between France and Spain, consequent on the abandonment of the Spanish match, had thrown Spain into the arms of Austria, and on 30 April, 1725, by the League of Vienna, Austria guaranteed Parma and Piacenza to Philip of Spain's son, Don Carlos, and undertook to promote by her good offices the recovery by Spain of Minorca and Gibraltar. In return Spain, by guaranteeing the "Pragmatic Sanction," pledged herself to the succession of Maria Theresa, the Emperor's eldest daughter, to the Austrian dominions. Secret clauses plighted one of the Emperor's daughters to a son of Philip and engaged Spain to support the Stuarts in England. England and France were naturally alarmed and on 3 September, 1725, signed with Prussia the Treaty of Hanover, guaranteeing the maintenance of the *status quo*. The Austro-Spanish alliance, however, had none of the elements of permanence, and in 1728-9 a series of fresh combinations ensued, Austria allying herself with Prussia (Secret Treaty of Berlin, 1728) and France countering by an alliance with Spain and England (1729) and shortly afterwards with Holland. This combination was even more incongruous than the union of Spain and Austria, and was ended by the Second Treaty of Vienna (March, 1731), an alliance between Spain, Austria, and England which left France isolated. This series of diplomatic experiments terminated in 1733, when, after first allying herself with Sardinia (Treaty of Turin, September, 1733), France renewed the Family Compact in the Treaty of the Escorial (7 November, 1733) and resumed her traditional position in European politics.

This step had been rendered necessary by the course of events in Poland. Since the day when Henry of Anjou had accepted the crown of Poland¹ France had never ceased to be interested and influential in that kingdom, and she desired to preserve Poland from partition and from falling under the tutelage of another power. The fact that the Queen of France was the daughter of the ex-King of Poland now gave an addi-

¹ *Supra*, p. 70.

tional interest. The death of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, in 1733 provoked an immediate crisis. Stanislas was immediately elected (12 September), only however to be driven a few days later, by the approach of a Russian army, from his newly recovered capital. Augustus III, son of the deceased King, was then raised to the throne by the aid of Austria and Russia. Even Fleury's inveterate dislike for war availed nothing against the popular feeling aroused by these events;¹ moreover Chauvelin, the author of the Treaty of the Escurial, who had been at the Foreign Office since 1727, did not share Fleury's pacific views. Allied as she was with Spain and Sardinia, France's opportunity against Austria lay in Italy and in that quarter she struck.

The War of the Polish Succession may be regarded as the *reductio ad absurdum* of the old style of warfare. The unwieldiness of the armies, the failure to find some decisive element of superiority in battle, the fact that all armies tended to the same level, the difficulties of supply and of manœuvre, and the improvement of weapons had brought tactics to a point where real warfare was almost impossible. The armies marched about, but without the acquiescence of both a battle could not be forced. The genius of Frederick the Great did indeed devise means of doing so; but already the old style was doomed. It was also a war of veterans: Villars who commanded in Italy was over eighty: Berwick who commanded on the Rhine had been fighting for fifty years: Eugène and Mercy were both old men. Villars quickly mastered the Milanese, only to die at Turin (July, 1734); but the French won the Battles of Parma (29 June) and Guastalla (19 September); Don Carlos seized the Two Sicilies, Sardinia occupied Milan, and the Austrians withdrew behind the Adige. Meanwhile Berwick had overrun Lorraine and taken Kehl, but he was killed in the trenches while besieging Philippsburg (12 June, 1734). Dissensions between the allies rather than the attainment of their ends brought the war to a premature conclusion. Fleury had disliked it from the first and now

¹ Marais, *op. cit.* iv. 530. "Every one is mad and runs to avenge his King."

began to negotiate behind Chauvelin's back; and France set the example of deserting allies—a process from which she herself was destined to suffer greatly. In October, 1735, preliminaries of peace were signed. France guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction (she afterwards scandalously broke her guarantee): Don Carlos retained the Sicilies; Parma and Piacenza returned to the Emperor, and Tuscany was allotted to Francis of Lorraine, the fiancé of Maria Theresa, in exchange for Bar and Lorraine, which were to be handed to Stanislas with reversion to France after his death. Sardinia was to receive Tortona and Novara with concessions in Liguria (Treaty of Vienna).¹

This treaty was an undoubted triumph for France. The reversion of Lorraine was a far greater acquisition than any which had been won by Louis XIV, and it had been won at a far lower cost. It is possible that, if Fleury had not interfered with Chauvelin, the latter might have carried the war to an even more triumphant and less treacherous conclusion. Contemporaries at least attributed to him the success of the war and to Fleury the blunder of prematurely and faithlessly ending it.² As it was the successful foreign minister was driven from office in February, 1737. Two years later (1739) France scored a further diplomatic success in the Peace of Belgrade, when by her instrumentality Austria handed over to Turkey, Wallachia, Servia, Orsova, and Belgrade. Turkey was the commercial client of France, whose policy it was to guard the Porte against encroachments by Russia and Austria.

Peace was now once more established; and with an active and reforming minister France might have looked for a period of recuperation. Yet it was now, in spite of commercial and industrial activity and honest financial administration, that the internal condition of France was at its lowest. It is in 1739, the last year of the period of peace that began in 1735, that d'Argenson

¹ Although the preliminaries were signed in October, 1735, the Treaty of Vienna was only ratified on 18 November, 1738, after prolonged haggling.

² d'Argenson, *op. cit.* iv. 222.

paints the most lurid of his pictures of the misery of the kingdom. "Le dedans du royaume est dans un état sans exemple," etc.; "in the provinces men are dying of hunger. Bread is at five *sous* in the Vendômois and at three in Paris and will rise in spring"; and in 1740 Barbier¹ writes that "bread is at four and a half *sous* in Paris although the harvest has been good". D'Argenson was certainly prone to exaggeration but there can be no doubt that there existed widespread misery.² The *intendants* tried to bring pressure to bear on the ministers but were overridden by Orry; taxation was maintained on a war footing and frightful rigours were necessary for the levying of it. Fleury was too old to be roused. D'Argenson himself approached him but without effect. Meanwhile there were signs that the peace might not endure much longer. Fleury's passion for peace indeed only increased the probabilities of war. Hostilities had already broken out between England and Spain (1739), and the death of the Emperor on 20 October, 1740, and the consequent raising of the great questions of the Austrian Succession and the Imperial Crown, made a general conflagration inevitable. Most of the Powers indeed had guaranteed the succession of Maria Theresa in Austria, and had received payment for their guarantees, France in the substantial shape of the reversion of Lorraine. But there were other claimants to the succession. The Emperor's elder brother Joseph had, like him, left two daughters, married respectively to the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria.³ But it was not from either of these quarters that the first blow was struck. Another great change of personality among the rulers of Europe had occurred in 1740. Frederick William of Prussia had died on 31 May, leaving his dominions to his son, Frederick II. Ambitious, clearheaded, and unscrupulous, Prussia's new ruler determined at once to exact his pound of flesh from the harassed "Queen of Hungary". On 16 December, while the rest of

¹ Barbier, *op. cit.* II. 263.

² "More men have died in this two years than perished in all the wars of Louis XIV" (March, 1760); d'Argenson, *op. cit.* III. 92.

³ The Elector of Bavaria was also in the Habsburg direct line through his grandmother—a daughter of the Emperor Leopold I. But both these princesses had resigned their claims on their marriages.

Europe was hesitating, he sprang upon Silesia and easily made himself master of that province; then offered his friendship to Maria Theresa in return for the confirmation of his conquest: an offer which the stout-hearted Queen quite naturally declined. Prussia was not the only State to see her opportunity in Austria's extremity. France, committed as she was to the Pragmatic Sanction, brazenly violated her word and allied herself with Frederick to "rob the Austrian hen-roost". In doing so she reckoned blindly upon honour among thieves and was destined to be rudely undeceived. By her own treachery she was sealing her own fate. What prompted France to take this foolish step? In the main the failure of her rulers to appreciate that things had changed since the seventeenth century. The shibboleths of Richelieu had no longer any real meaning, but they were the only words that came to the lips of her parrot statesmen. Fleury indeed saw the blunder but was too senile to avert it. Power was passing to younger men, the most prominent of whom, from his vigour and plausibility, was the Comte de Belleisle, a grandson of Fouquet. He it was who brought the rusted weapon of Richelieu out of the armoury and laid it down that "Austria must be destroyed," that at all costs Francis must not be elected Emperor. The selection of Belleisle to represent France in the Electoral College at Frankfort meant war with Austria.

Frederick gained his first victory at Mollwitz on 10 April, 1741. France allied herself with Prussia in June, and in July, while Maillebois led an army of 30,000 men into Westphalia, a Franco-Bavarian army led by Belleisle himself invaded Bohemia and captured Prague. Fleury was sceptical of Frederick's good faith, and d'Argenson prophesied that Prussia would turn on France and ally herself with the maritime powers. The truth of this prophecy was demonstrated with startling rapidity. Eight months after the signature of the alliance with France Frederick signed a secret agreement with Austria (Convention of Klein Schnellendorf, 9 October, 1741), but, as Austria did not observe the stipulated secrecy, he invaded Moravia and Bohemia (May, 1742) and brought her to her knees; on 11 June, 1742 (Treaty of Breslau)

Maria Theresa surrendered Silesia and Glatz to Prussia, and France was left to fight her battles alone. Great was the consternation in Paris, for the French armies were buried deep in Bohemia, and the release by the Convention of Klein Schnellendorf of the Austrian troops who had been held in Silesia, had already exposed them to the greatest danger. On 24 January, 1742, just when France's protégé, Charles Albert of Bavaria, was being raised to the imperial dignity as Charles VII, the Austrians recovered Linz, and on the very day of the imperial coronation (12 February) Munich fell into their hands. Prague was invested by the Austrians and the army was only extricated by the skill of Belleisle,¹ the city itself surrendering (2 January, 1743) to the Austrians with the honours of war. A few days later Fleury died (29 January, 1743).²

Meanwhile the fall of Walpole (February, 1742) had given a warlike turn to English policy. Cartaret desired to humble France and, in 1743, an Anglo-Dutch-Hanoverian army commanded by George II appeared on the Main. Profiting by the dense stupidity of the English King, Noailles who commanded the French army herded his opponents into a trap at Dettingen, from which they could hardly have escaped but for the insubordination of the French General, Grammont, and the ill-behaviour of the French infantry (27 June, 1743). This turned victory into defeat and France was only saved from invasion by the dissensions of the allies.

Reaping disaster by reason of her foolish antagonism to Austria, France now sowed another crop by her equally foolish infatuation for Spain. Spain was still intent on her darling scheme for apanages in the Italian Peninsula, and France, by the Treaty of Fontainebleau (25 October, 1743), committed herself to war for the promotion of Spanish interests in Italy. So she

¹ Frederick the Great always thought Belleisle a good soldier.

² The Cardinal's death was generally welcomed. He had lived to become the subject of widespread hatred.

“ Sans opulence et sans éclat,
Se bornant au pouvoir suprême,
Si Fleury vécut pour lui-même,
Il mourut pour l'état ”

was a current lampoon.

set out to make war as she afterwards made peace "en roi non en marchand". The kingdom was bled, lives and treasure squandered in order that the children of the grandson of Louis XIV should enjoy apanages in Italy.¹ Fear of Spanish encroachments in that quarter had at length driven Sardinia into alliance with her traditional enemy Austria (Treaty of Worms, 15 November, 1743, between Austria, England, Sardinia, and Saxony). Frederick was stirred to action by this treaty and on 5 April, 1744, concluded the Union of Frankfort with Sweden, the Palatinate, and France.

It was a relief to France to secure the assistance of a monarch who, however treacherous, had proved himself so powerful. France indeed had been in a perilous plight; in April, 1744, d'Argenson, who became foreign minister in November, and was largely responsible for the quixotic entanglements above narrated, deplored her stricken and friendless condition: "Sans roi," he said, "sans ministre" (Fleury was just dead), "sans officiers" (the great generals of the earlier generation were dead and the genius of Saxe had not yet been proved), "sans courage" (exaggerated surely), "sans discipline" (he refers to the behaviour of the French infantry at Dettingen), "sans argent" (that, alas, was too true), "sans hommes dans le royaume" (quite right, the population was declining), "sans réputation de bonne foi" (e.g. the repudiation of the Pragmatic Sanction and the conclusion of the Peace of Vienna), "d'habilité ni de force" (author's hyperbole perhaps). If half of this were true France might welcome even so faithless and self-seeking an ally as Frederick.

It was decided that the main French effort should be made in Flanders, where Saxe had been established since the preceding year. This decision was much criticized and Frederick, with his usual directness, declared that the siege of Babylon would have been as much use as that of Tournai, the first enterprise of the campaign. But it must not be forgotten that, in the absence of an adequate French navy, Flanders was the only quarter in which the maritime powers were vulnerable by France. Louis XV went to the front in person and

¹ Cp. d'Argenson, *op. cit.* iv. 299.

military life galvanized him into unwonted vigour. "The King is full of activity and gaiety," writes Barbier.¹ D'Argenson was delighted: "the King is doing well at the front, working hard to understand things, talking to every one. The joy is great. Shall we have a King?"²

Maurice de Saxe, the hero of the campaign of 1745, was a soldier of fortune, a natural son of Augustus the Strong of Saxony and Poland. His military talent was of the highest value to his adopted country at this juncture. He made a sudden swoop on Tournai, and on 11 May, 1745, gave battle to an allied army led by Cumberland which was marching to the relief of the town. By the sheer courage of the British infantry, who marched right up to the French entrenchments under a murderous crossfire and withstood charge after charge of cavalry, the battle was almost decided, and bade fair to become a second Poitiers, for both the King and the Dauphin were present. But Cumberland's combinations failed and Saxe kept his head, wore down the English attack, and reversed the fortunes of the day by his skilful use of artillery. The fruits of the victory of Fontenoy were Ghent, Alost, Oudenarde, Ostend, Bruges, and Nieuport.³

In Italy, too, fortune smiled on French arms. Maillebois took advantage of the friendship of Genoa to advance from the Riviera into Montferrat. There he joined hands with the Spaniards, won the battle of Bassignano (27 September), swept the Austrians to the gates of Alessandria, and but for the opening of negotiations would have taken that city. This brilliant little campaign served Bonaparte to some extent as a model in 1796.⁴ In Central Germany Frederick had been rendering a good account of himself, winning on 4 June the victory of Hohenfriedburg, and on 30 September that of Soor. These victories, the withdrawal of the English to meet the Stuart rising at home, and the election of her husband to the imperial crown, disposed Maria Theresa to attempt the

¹ Barbier, *op. cit.* II. 393.

² d'Argenson, *op. cit.* IV. 101.

³ Napoleon said with much truth that the victory of Fontenoy made the monarchy live forty years longer than it would otherwise have done.

⁴ *Infra*, III. 66 and *note*.

isolation of Prussia by negotiation with France. D'Argenson, however, was both an honest diplomatist and a bitter enemy of Austria: it was contrary to his methods to abandon diplomatic honesty, and contrary to his judgment to allow Austria to recover Silesia. Frederick, however, had no such scruples. Maria Theresa was planning an invasion of Bohemia in conjunction with the Elector of Saxony. Realizing this, Frederick sprang upon Saxony, won the battle of Kesselsdorf (12 December),¹ and dictated terms to Austria (Peace of Dresden, 25 December). In return for the recognition by Prussia of Francis as Emperor, Frederick was confirmed in his possession of Silesia and withdrew from the war. Isolation was the reward of the honesty of France's philosopher statesman. A similar diplomatic quixotism was at the same time being displayed by d'Argenson in Italy, where Charles Emmanuel of Sardinia was allowed to dictate his own terms in the Treaty of Turin (25 December, 1745). But that astute sovereign had no idea of observing the terms longer than was convenient to himself, and very soon he saw his opportunity, drove the French out of Asti, cleared Milan and Parma, and with the aid of the Austrians defeated the Franco-Spanish army at Piacenza (10 June). Genoa surrendered and the French and Spaniards were obliged to evacuate Italy. Provence was invaded and it needed all Belleisle's courage and determination to repel this attack.

After the Peace of Dresden, Saxe continued his successful career. Brussels was captured by a fine winter march (21 February, 1746)—a master stroke which placed the whole of the Austrian Netherlands at his mercy. Mons, Charleroi, Namur, and Antwerp capitulated in succession. Finally Saxe defeated the Emperor's brother, Charles of Lorraine, at Raucoux (11 October, 1746). Holland lay open to him, and in 1747 he invaded that country and defeated Cumberland in the pitched battle of Laufeldt (2 July, 1747). On 16 September, Bergen-op-Zoom fell into his hands. The conquest of Holland had been necessary in order to maintain the open

¹ It was the old Dessauer who actually won Kesselsdorf, Frederick himself being engaged farther east.

door for merchandise by way of the Low Countries, for all other doors were closed owing to the gradually increasing domination of the sea by the English. Food was already very dear in France, coffee had risen to a prohibitive price, and the pious Catholics of France could get no cod for the Lenten fast of 1747 except what came by way of Holland.¹ If the Low Countries were closed the distress would be extreme. It was not that France had suffered any great naval disaster such as she was destined to suffer in the Seven Years War. The English navy only established its superiority by a long series of minor successes which gave little promise of its eventual crushing superiority. Nevertheless these successes were sufficient to turn the scale against France in India and the colonies; and, although the fight for the new world was barely begun during the War of the Austrian Succession, enough was done to show that the future was for the power that possessed the command of the sea.

It was in India that the advantage seemed most in favour of France. There the French and English Companies glared at each other from their contiguous stations under very equal conditions, each ready to grab what could be grabbed, and each sedulously attempting the domination and exploitation of the native princes. The rulers of India and the governments on either side were apt to forget that no amount of domination and exploitation of natives would decide the future of the country. That would have to be determined between Europeans, and the country that provided the best supply of European troops and maintained the command of the sea would win in the end whatever the energy of its rival in native affairs. Neither side fully appreciated this fact; rarely, in the long wars which decided the fate of India, could either put 1,000 Europeans into the field. But England appreciated it a little more fully than France. She just managed to keep the control of the sea, and, if in numbers her troops were often inferior, in personnel they were superior and in leadership incomparably so. India was won by the personal merit of half-unknown Englishmen.

¹ Barbier, *op. cit.* III. 4-21.

In the early stages of the struggle there was one Frenchman who understood the value of the command of the sea. La Bourdonnais, a man of wide vision but intractable character, had seized the Islands of the Indian Ocean and established therein a powerful naval base. If this base had been properly used at once, and if la Bourdonnais had been able to co-operate with the French Governor-General, Dupleix, the English might have been rushed out of India. Unfortunately Dupleix did not see this, and the companies agreed to remain at peace though their governments were at war. Dupleix was one of the most remarkable men who ever set foot in India. Endowed with immense energy and indomitable persistency, he had also a real grasp of the oriental character, of its impressionability and pliability. He became almost an oriental himself and was the originator of the methods by which India is still governed by the successors of his antagonists. How he failed we shall see as the story unfolds itself. That such a man should fail seemed at the outset to the last degree improbable.

In September, 1745, hostilities commenced and la Bourdonnais, having driven away the English squadron, captured Madras, the English capital. For some unexplained reason, and deeply to the disgust of Dupleix, he handed it back to England on the payment of a ransom. Bitter recriminations ensued, with the result that la Bourdonnais sailed away and the French lost command of the sea. The departure of la Bourdonnais was a disaster of the first magnitude. Dupleix now took matters into his own hands, and, employing native troops for the first time, once more seized and this time kept Madras. He then proceeded to the siege of Fort St. David (about twelve miles south of Pondicherry), whither the English had rallied after the fall of Madras, but was thwarted by the arrival of an English squadron. La Bourdonnais' departure now began to make itself felt; the tables were turned and the English laid siege to Pondicherry. Only Dupleix' heroism and energy saved the town. Then followed the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle by which Madras and all the fruits of Dupleix' labours were restored to England. The results

of the Indian fighting till 1748 may be summarized as follows : Dupleix' brilliant figure still dominated India, and in purely Indian affairs he could count on having the upper hand. But the sea was lost, and the arrival of an English fleet could undo in a few days the labour of years, while the blunderings of bored politicians in Versailles could do the same in as many minutes.

In America it was much the same ; but here England had started with considerable advantages. By the Peace of Utrecht France had already lost Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, but she retained Canada and Louisiana (with the undefined claim of the latter to the hinterland of the English colonies), as well as Cape Breton Island which commanded the mouth of the St. Lawrence, while in the West Indies her chief possessions were Guadeloupe, Martinique, and half of Hayti. England, on the other hand, was established in the "thirteen colonies," the nucleus of the United States, by far the richest and most populous part of North America. Where France had a population of 80,000 England had 1,200,000 ; moreover the English colonies were maritime, self-governing, and independent, whereas the French still suffered from their monkish, Jesuitical origin and also from the coddling treatment they received from home. In America no events of first-class importance occurred during the War of the Austrian Succession, the greatest being the capture of Cape Breton Island and its capital Louisburg in 1745, which was effected by the English colonists backed by the English fleet. So important was this place that its return was the price received at the Peace of Aix for the surrender of Madras to England.

To return to Europe, d'Argenson had for long been making efforts for peace. An abortive conference was held at Breda in 1746, and its failure had involved the disgrace of the minister (10 January, 1747). It is possible that the statesmen of Europe scarcely credited the French protestations that they desired no conquests. Gradually, however, the English began to realize that this was the case ; and a fresh conference was summoned to Aix-la-Chapelle (April, 1748). The difficulties were by no means insuperable, for France adhered to her deter-

mination to exact no reward for her exertions. The sound of Saxé's guns round Maestricht encouraged the members of the conference to agree quickly, and the result was the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. France resigned all her conquests and restored the barrier fortresses on condition that Don Philip of Spain should receive Parma and Piacenza; the Treaty of Worms was confirmed for the benefit of Sardinia. Silesia was handed to Prussia. Genoa and Modena were restored to their independence. Francis was acknowledged Emperor, and England retained all the commercial advantages of the Peace of Utrecht. Madras was restored to her, France receiving Louisburg in exchange. The Hanoverian dynasty was recognized, and the unfortunate Charles Edward was rudely ejected from France.¹ Those who profited by the Peace of Aix were Prussia, Sardinia, Spain, and England. Austria was the chief sufferer, for the concessions to Spain and Prussia were at her expense; and in the humiliation of Austria France found her only compensation for her sacrifices, for the treaty gave her no shred of material gain. She had made peace as she had made war, *en roi non en marchand*. The announcement of the terms was received in Paris with stony silence. *Tu es bête comme la paix* became a current taunt.

The eight years of peace which followed the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle are the period of the ascendancy of Madame de Pompadour. Madamed'Étioles, daughter of Monsieur Poisson, a *commissaire des vivres*, had been established as recognized royal mistress in 1745, and raised to the rank of Marquise de Pompadour. By this time her power over the King was complete: she kept the Court in a constant state of carnival, and tickled Louis' jaded palate with every novelty her ingenuity could devise.² Madame de Pompadour is justly reproached with having spent, in order to gratify Louis' whims and her own insatiable appetite for luxury and splendour, prodigious

¹ He was seized in the Paris Opera House, bound and roughly hustled away—very shameful treatment for an old ally (see Barbier, op. cit. III. 49 sqq.).

² Barbier, op. cit. III. 12, for Madame de Pompadour's accomplishments, and III. 123: "Le roi a une grande disposition à s'ennuyer partout, et c'est la grande art de Madame de Pompadour de chercher à le dissiper".

sums of money at a time when the nation was groaning under burdensome taxation. But it must not be forgotten that under her patronage, and almost by her direct initiative, an attempt was now made really to grapple with the financial difficulties in which the country was enmeshed. Had this attempt been successful it might have altered the whole future of France, a result against which the extravagances of the Court might be reckoned as trivial. Madame de Pompadour came out of a financial *milieu*, and within the regions of finance she seems to have been an acute judge of men and things. Pâris du Verney had been in her father's office, and it was by her influence that, in 1745, Machault had been appointed Controller-General. Machault's ministry is often passed over as unimportant because it was unsuccessful, but his proposed reform would have gone near to solve the financial problem with which France was confronted until the Revolution, and to which, more than to anything else, the outbreak of the Revolution was due.

There prevailed in France in the middle of the eighteenth century three intolerable abuses in the matter of taxation: first, the existence of privileged classes—the clergy, the nobility, and the *noblesse de robe*—who in varying degrees escaped a large part of the burden of taxation;¹ secondly, the existence of privileged districts, mostly those which had been acquired in comparatively recent times (e.g. Languedoc and Brittany), and which had “contracted out” of national taxation when they had been acquired; as well as some which had received special terms in the Wars of Religion; thirdly, the habit of making false assessment returns which had come to be regarded almost as a matter of course. Machault took office in 1745 and first occupied himself in an investigation of the conditions under which the taxes were farmed, with a view to reducing the swollen profits of the farmers. When the war came to an end, the *dixième*—a war tax—ceased with it, and the controller imposed a *vingtième* in its place, and imposed it on all classes and in every district (1748-9). At once the air began to ring with the protests of the *priviliégiés*. The *Parlements* protested vehemently; the

¹ See *supra*, pp. 283-4, *note*, for a more detailed list of *priviliégiés*.

provincial *États* claimed their historical, and of course legally valid, exemptions, while the Clergy in their assembly of 1750 once more denied the right of the State to tax them at all, at the same time protesting against Machault's praiseworthy attempt to reduce the crying evil of gifts in *mortmain* (1749). At first the King, who seems to have had a real belief in his minister, stood firm: the protesting Estates were dissolved and the *Parlement* and Clergy overridden. Then unfortunately the financial question began to get involved in the religious question which was once more becoming inflamed. The unpopularity of Madame de Pompadour also passed to her protégés. Under these conditions all depended on the King's strength of character, and the weakness of a King who was weary rather than wicked became apparent. Gradually Louis drew back before the outcry. Concessions were made to the *privilegiés*, to the favoured districts, to the clergy. The attempted assassination of the King in January, 1757, completed the collapse; Machault had failed; a month later he gave up the seals of office.

With him fell another important minister, the Comte d'Argenson, brother of the Marquis. He had been minister for war since 1743, and in his own department had accomplished some notable reforms: the organization of the militia, the foundation (1751) of the military school, above all the admission to officer's rank of others than nobles: during his period of office *roturiers* began to receive commissions and before his resignation one-third of the officers were non-noble. D'Argenson, however, was not only minister for war, he was leader of the Ultramontane party in France and took a prominent part in the struggle between Jansenists and Ultramon-
tanes (or Molinists¹ as they were called) between 1751-8. That quarrel had broken out with increasing bitterness over the question of the refusal of the Sacraments to persons convicted or suspected of Jansenism. The system of tickets of confession, imposed by certain bishops in order to make

¹ From the Spanish Jesuit, Molina, whose doctrines were a special object of Jansenist attack.

Jansenists declare themselves, provoked widespread agitation.¹ Priests who refused the Sacraments were prosecuted before the *Parlement*, which took a very strong Jansenist line. Louis, whose instincts were all in favour of orthodoxy, at first resisted the claims of the *Parlements* and deprived them of all jurisdiction over matters concerning the Sacrament (February, 1753). Two months later he dissolved the *Parlement* of Paris and attempted to get its work done by the *Conseil du Roi*. But he had not the persistency really to crush the *Parlements*: very soon they were recalled, and once more began their crusade against the Ultramontanes, many of whom, including bishops, were exiled.² The misfortune was, that, while taking the popular side and voicing the popular opinion, the *Parlements*, purely professional bodies whose members had bought their offices, could never really represent the people of France; the union of the *Parlements* in 1756 therefore had no constitutional significance. Louis XV took the worst possible line in dealing with them; he was alternately violent and conciliatory, so that he managed to offend every one, and so that the *Parlements* came to feel not only that they had the popular backing,³ but that they were able to bully and frighten the King.

Damiens' attempt on the King's life (5 January, 1757) gave the final impulse to the movement of retrogression which had already begun. Louis was terrified, and at once determined to part with every one who had anything to do with the policy which had made him unpopular. Machault's financial reforms were abandoned—a terrible blunder; and at the same time the ultramontane policy associated with the name of the Comte d'Argenson, which was pure gain. Unfortunately, while the abandonment of the ultramontane policy was merely temporary, that of the financial reform was permanent; these two facts alone made ultimate revolution inevitable. Nothing can be more certain than that revolution was by this time both

¹ Rocquain, op. cit. v. 149.

² 1754 was a very dangerous crisis. Rocquain maintains (op. cit. 180) that the Revolution was within an ace of breaking out, and adds: "Would that it had; it would have limited the monarchy and crushed ultramontanism".

³ See d'Argenson, op. cit. VIII, 153, 241, 249, 309.

expected and desired by many of the most enlightened minds in France. The word comes naturally to the lips of d'Argenson. He foresaw it and thought that it would be anti-monarchic in form and a great triumph for democracy.¹ D'Argenson, however, was a dreamer and his judgment was apt to be erratic. It is more probable that a revolution in mid-eighteenth century would have favoured a limitation of the monarchy together with the creation of a Civil List on English lines. Few will deny that a revolution in some form was by this time desirable. One which would have admitted the middle classes to a share in the government, limited the absolutism of the Crown, swept away the few remaining feudal payments, removed the gross abuses of privilege, and above all placed taxation on a fair basis, would have commended itself to every one. It is both surprising and regrettable that this revolution was postponed, surprising because the moment seemed favourable and the time ripe, regrettable because every day it was postponed made reform on reasonable lines more difficult.

As it was the abuses of taxation continued as bad as ever; the politico-religious crisis remained unsettled, though a temporary truce had been called. At the same time a further decline in the morals of the King has to be recorded. He passed from the comparative decency of recognized mistresses to the pleasures of *l'amour volage*. This is the unsavoury period of the "little mistresses" and the *parc aux cerfs*; and the Court followed the royal lead. "Notre Roi," men said, "est au-dessous de rien."² Into the prostrate form of the Bourbon monarchy was poured meanwhile a torrent of barbed shafts from the pens of the *Philosophes*. Montesquieu's "Esprit des lois" had been published in 1748, the first volume of the "Encyclopédie" had appeared in 1751, and Voltaire's caustic

¹ See d'Argenson, *op. cit.* iv. 83 (30 July, 1743): "La Révolution est certaine dans cet état ci," and *cp.* v. 142 and vii. 51. See also Rocquain, *op. cit.* *passim*.

² When Madame de Pompadour died in 1764 she was succeeded in her disgraceful functions by a woman of a much lower type—Madame du Barry, who had all her predecessor's vices without any of her charm. The choice of this vulgar creature as royal mistress had a disastrous effect on public opinion.

and prolific pen was by this time at the height of its power: Rousseau's star was just rising above the horizon. The *Philosophes* did not start the revolutionary movement; it existed before they began to work, but they added greatly to its scope and violence. Under these desperate conditions, with the war-cloud once more upon the horizon, men saw and bluntly said that the monarchy was doomed. "Le dernier soupir de la monarchie mourante" is a phrase of d'Argenson; and Grimm believed that all Europe would be involved in the approaching revolution.

During the whole of the period 1748-56, it had been plain that the Peace of Aix had been no final settlement. So early as 1753 there had been unrest in the disputed ground in America. In the autumn of that year Braddock was sent out with reinforcements for the English; and in 1755 Boscawen and Hawke began to intercept French shipping off Newfoundland. It was now that France paid the penalty for the comparative neglect of her navy, which had been going on ever since the fall of Colbert. The inevitable struggle for the New World would have to be decided largely on the sea, or at any rate oversea, indeed it was to a great extent already decided by the fact that France could no longer challenge British naval supremacy. The weakness of the French Navy must not be exaggerated. Both Rouillé (1749-54) and Machault had considerably added to and improved it; it was only after Machault's disgrace that it was really neglected, and this neglect continued until Choiseul's ministry. The French policy of fighting in Europe rather than in the New World has often been the subject of criticism; as a matter of fact it was a matter not of policy but of necessity. How could France do otherwise without the command of the sea? Similarly her constant coquetting with Spain has been denounced as short-sighted. In reality there was no other power to whom she could look for the necessary naval support against England. The idea of the Family Compact to which France continually recurred, was therefore not merely or even mainly a dynastic alliance, but a desperate attempt to restore the balance at sea. Failing the support of Spain—and the French advances in that

direction in 1754-5 were coldly received—the best thing that France could do was to strike at Hanover, which, although the British people were indifferent to it, was dear to the heart of the British Sovereign ; this indeed was not the true policy of France, but, the true policy having been abandoned fifty years ago, it was the only policy open to her. Frederick's political instinct told him that, as a consequence of the naval inferiority of France, the impending war would be fought in Europe and he saw the danger of his own position. This danger was greatly heightened by the weakness of his old ally, France ; and the conclusion of a Russo-British alliance in September, 1755, decided him to reject the French overtures for a renewal of the alliance, and to enter into relations with Britain. Over the head of the French ambassador, with dramatic swiftness, Frederick made an agreement with Britain which was the first embodiment in words of the " Diplomatic Revolution " (Treaty of Westminster, 16 January, 1756). For some time past a diplomatic upheaval had been in the air ; ever since 1750 Kaunitz, the Austrian ambassador at Versailles, had been pressing the alliance of Austria upon France ; Louis XV had hesitated ; his quarrel was now with England, and he had no desire to fight the battle of his old enemy Austria and embroil himself with his late ally Prussia, whereas it was difficult to see how Austria could help him to fight his battles against England, for she was powerless at sea and averse also to the idea of an attack on Hanover. The Treaty of Westminster suddenly isolated France and drove her into the arms of Austria as a mere condition of safety. On 1 May, 1756, the First Treaty of Versailles was signed ; Austria agreed to observe neutrality in the war between France and England, while France pledged herself to respect the Austrian territories. If either power were attacked the other agreed to help with an army of 24,000 men.

The attitude of Russia now further embroiled affairs. Her policy was plain ; her enemy was Frederick. After the Treaty of Westminster she dissociated herself from England and now entered into negotiations with Austria. Frederick saw the danger and at once decided to force matters. In October,

1756, he advanced suddenly into Saxony, whose Elector was also negotiating with the Austrians, and obliged the Saxon army to capitulate at Pirna (15 October, 1756). This high-handed action, which was specially irritating to France because the Dauphin was the Elector's son-in-law,¹ cemented and extended the Austro-Frankish alliance. On 1 May, 1757, the second Treaty of Versailles was signed. It was the embodiment of the full policy of Kaunitz ; France engaged herself not only to keep a large army in the field, but to pay Austria a large subsidy (12,000,000 florins) and to fight until Silesia was once more in Austrian hands, i.e. for the exact contradiction of what she had fought for in the War of the Austrian Succession. In return Austria agreed to surrender the Low Countries and Luxemburg to Louis XV's son-in-law, the Spanish Infant Philip,² whose Italian Duchies (Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla) were to revert to Austria ; France was to receive Chimay and Beaumont together with Ypres, Furnes, Ostend, Nieuport, Knocke, and the town of Mons. Minorca (which had been captured from the English on 28 June, 1756, by an excellent action of la Galissonnière) and Dunkirk were also guaranteed to France.

That the balance of advantage under this treaty was enormously in favour of Austria is obvious. Not only was she to recover Silesia, but her predominance in Italy was to be revived in exchange for the sacrifice of the Netherlands, always a troublesome and detached possession ; and France did not even obtain the Netherlands for herself, but only for her protégé, Don Philip ; here we see the Family Compact policy on its weak side. All she stood to gain for the efforts she pledged herself to make was an accession of territory along the Channel seaboard (important indeed, but a trifle as weighed against what Austria stood to gain), the town of Mons, and the guarantee of Minorca and Dunkirk. Of the colonial struggle not a word : she was to fight her battle in that quarter practi-

¹ The Princess Maria Josepha of Saxony was his second wife ; he had married her in January, 1747.

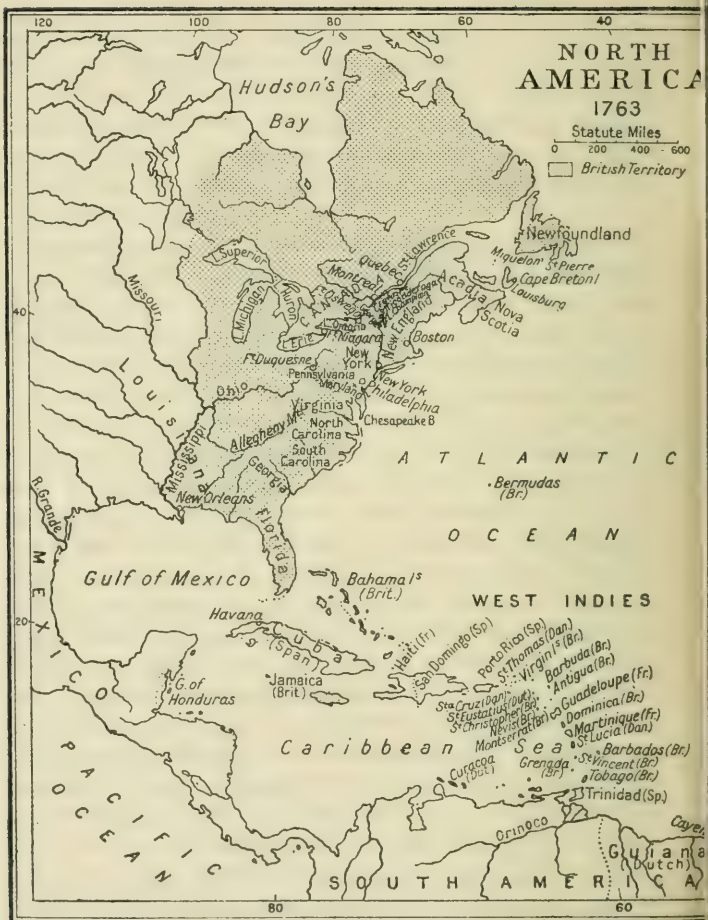
² Married to the Princess Louise Elizabeth, the eldest of Louis XV's six daughters.

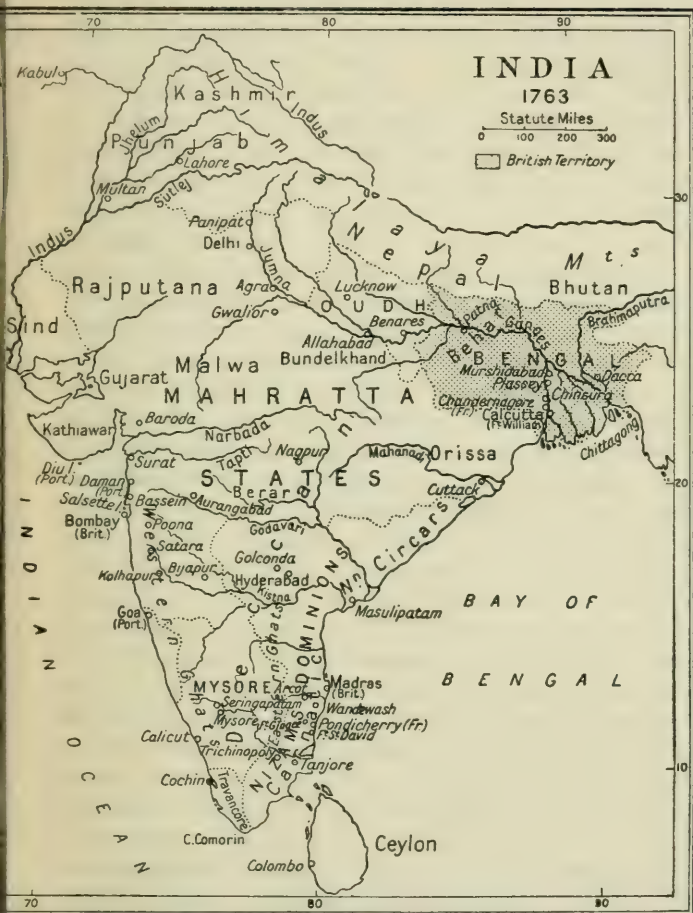
cally unaided. It is useless to reproach Bernis, the new foreign minister, and Madame de Pompadour, who were the chief agents in this agreement ; France was powerless to insist on a better bargain : after the Treaty of Westminster Austria could practically dictate her terms. And so, just as France had wasted herself for Spain in the late war, she was now forced to waste herself for Austria in the new. The blame was not so much that of contemporary statesmen, as that of Louis XIV and the men who had ignored the navy and shut their eyes to the idea of colonial expansion.

Such advantages as France stood to gain by the Second Treaty of Versailles at first seemed likely to be easily secured. Frederick was isolated in the midst of a hostile Europe, and his only ally, England, was at first half-hearted in his cause. But he had the central position, a magnificent army, and his own great genius. The early stages of the war justified the confidence of the allies. France had already captured Minorca and her arms under Montcalm had been successful in Canada. Had she but had an adequate fleet she might have snatched from Britain the foundations of the British Empire. Very soon, however, her political and military weakness began to show itself. Machault and the Comte d'Argenson had been replaced by Paulmy and Peirenc de Moras, young men of no capacity who owed their promotion to the influence of Madame de Pompadour, while foreign affairs had been entrusted to the Abbé Bernis, the negotiator of the treaties of Versailles. Delighted with the success of her diplomatic intervention, the favourite desired to make her hand felt everywhere, and insisted that the military commands should be given to her favourites. With incompetents in the ministry and incompetents at the head of the troops, France entered on the last great European struggle of the monarchical period, and it was as much Madame de Pompadour who lost it as Frederick the Great who won it. The first rounds had indeed gone all in favour of France and Austria. Frederick won the battle of Prague (6 May, 1757), and shut up Prince Charles of Lorraine in that city, only to be defeated by the Austrians under Daun at Kolin (18 June), and to see Prague relieved. Meanwhile

the French had crossed the Rhine; d'Estrées defeated Cumberland at Hastenbeck (26 July), and Hanover and Brunswick lay open to the French. Frederick at this moment was in a desperate plight and vainly tried to open negotiations. The disastrous entrance on the scene of the Pompadour favourites, however, completely gave away the advantage. The Duke of Richelieu superseded d'Estrées and agreed to the foolish Convention of Kloster-Seven (8 September), by which the English army was allowed to escape on condition that it took no further part in the war—a condition which was afterwards repudiated by the British ministry.

Nevertheless the situation of Frederick was critical and a united advance on the part of the allies would assuredly have crushed him. The advance was not made, and it was not till 5 November that Frederick was routed on the Saale by an imperial army commanded by Hildburghausen with a French contingent under Soubise, another Pompadour favourite. The battle of Rossbach was one of the most complete defeats that has ever fallen to the lot of a commander. Twenty-five thousand defeated sixty thousand; "seldom," as Carlyle said, "has an army been better beaten". Exactly a month later Frederick defeated the Austrians with almost as great completeness at Leuthen (5 December). Victory cemented once more the Anglo-Prussian Alliance. The advantages gained by France and Austria in the early stages had been completely lost. Madame de Pompadour was ready with a fresh favourite, the Comte de Clermont, to replace the discredited Richelieu. Clermont withdrew over the Rhine followed by Ferdinand of Brunswick who had replaced Cumberland. Clermont was a great-grandson of the great Condé, but, when on 23 June he met Ferdinand at Crefeld, with odds very much in his favour, he showed none of the family genius, and the French army of the Rhine was practically exterminated. Contades, who replaced him, made some stand against the victorious Brunswick, while Soubise did something to redeem his character by recording two minor successes at Sondershausen and Luttenburg. The year 1758, however, closed in gloom; even the Russians, though they had fought with all the stub-





bornness of their race in the indecisive battle of Zorndorf (25 August, 1758), had been forced to evacuate Brandenburg.

The gloom was intensified by the course of events oversea. The tide was making strong against France in America, the West Indies, and India; even in West Africa the English had made an easy prey of Senegal. In America Amherst and Wolfe captured Louisburg on 27 July, 1758; Montcalm, who commanded the French troops in Canada, had met with considerable success but was now in great straits, and in the winter (1758-9) Fort Duquesne was lost (to be converted into Pittsburg) and the connexion between Canada and Louisiana was broken. In the following year (1759) Wolfe advanced up the St. Lawrence while Amherst attempted to force his way into Canada by Lakes George and Champlain. Both attacks went home. The English fleet, by a wonderful feat of navigation, sailed up the St. Lawrence and even past the guns of Quebec where Montcalm was entrenched. Both generals now displayed a strange want of activity. Wolfe bombarded Quebec across the river but does not seem to have realized that, with the fleet upstream, he was in a position to take Quebec in rear, while Montcalm watched his enemy scatter his forces without making any attempt to deal with him in detail. While events were thus hanging fire on the St. Lawrence, Amherst had penetrated as far as Crown Point on Lake Champlain, Ticonderoga being evacuated without a shot having been fired. Montreal felt itself threatened, and although want of transport kept Amherst inactive for a long time his presence on Lake Champlain had great moral effect on the situation at Quebec. Wolfe at length decided to scale the cliffs of the northern bank and threaten Quebec from the west. He effected his purpose very cleverly, and his sudden appearance on the plateau to the west of the town so startled Montcalm, that he very unwisely decided to attack him at once. The battle was won for the English practically by a single terrible volley. Both Montcalm and Wolfe were killed, and Quebec capitulated on 13 September. The star of France was setting in America. Murray, who succeeded Wolfe, improved the English foothold in Quebec, while Amherst prepared for the completion of his

task. Leaving a force under Haviland to push on down Lake Champlain, he himself proceeded by Lake Ontario down the St. Lawrence, with the object of joining hands with Murray, who was instructed to push up the river. The three forces were intended to concentrate on Montreal. This elaborate plan, thanks to the organizing genius of Amherst, was carried through with marvellous precision. Montreal capitulated (8 September, 1760), and the conquest of Canada was complete. Guadeloupe had already been captured in 1759 and Martinique followed suit in 1762. Louisiana, Cayenne, and half of San Domingo alone remained in French hands.

In India matters went little better. The Treaty of Aix had not brought any pause in the hostilities between the rival companies. A violent conflict arose in 1749 over a disputed claim to the viceroyalty of the Deccan, each side putting forward its own puppet. The French puppet, Murzapha Jung, aided by French troops, advanced to Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, and having captured it declared himself viceroy. Murzapha's disinherited elder brother, Nasir Jung, now applied to the English for help. The fortune of war favoured the French. Bussy, Dupleix' most competent general, stormed the Fort of Gingee, always thought to be impregnable; Nasir came to the rescue, but was defeated and killed, and Murzapha was installed viceroy at Pondicherry in December, 1750. This was a complete triumph for the French and during the following year (1751) the French power was at its zenith in India. In that year, however, the English once more challenged the French domination by taking up the cause of Mohammed Ali, whom the French were keeping out of his inheritance. The struggle centred round Trichinopoly. Fort St. David was used as a base, but the course of the war was at first unfavourable and the British in Trichinopoly were cut off and in a most perilous position. The only chance was a diversion and it was decided to attack Arcot. This task was entrusted to Clive, who succeeded in capturing the town and entrenching himself therein. The pressure on Trichinopoly was relieved, and Clive's repulse of the great attack on Arcot (24 November, 1751) marks the turn of the tide in favour of the British. Clive

returned to Fort St. David in December. No sooner was he gone than the enemy recovered himself and cut the communications between Arcot and Madras. Clive returned to the front, and, having walked into a regular death-trap at Covrepauk, extricated himself by his wonderful composure and resourcefulness and inflicted a severe defeat on the enemy (February, 1752).

Covrepauk was an important victory ; it established the prestige of the English and undermined that of the French. It enabled Clive and his great coadjutor, Stringer Laurence, to go to the relief of Trichinopoly. On 13 June, 1752, that city was relieved ; and Law,¹ who had had command of the hostile forces there, surrendered. The failure of a mad attempt to storm Gingee revived the hopes of the French who now tried to cut off Trichinopoly from its base by blockading Fort St. Jean. Laurence proceeded from Madras to thwart this attempt and won a decisive victory at Bahoor on 6 September, 1752, while Clive swept all the country north of the river Paliar. Worst of in the field, Dupleix still maintained his supremacy by diplomacy and his influence over the native princes. With large reinforcements he attempted during the whole of 1753 to recover Trichinopoly, and was only kept at bay by the resourceful defence of Laurence. In 1754 it even seemed that he might be successful when on 11 October a thunderbolt fell. Dupleix was recalled, and France threw away her only chance of maintaining herself in India. Hostilities were suspended and in January, 1755, a conditional treaty was signed. Thus ended the real fight for India ; but for Dupleix' recall it might have been fought to a conclusion favourable to France. It must be remembered that Dupleix was by no means defeated ; he had met with many reverses but he had placed the company in a financial position sounder than that of the English Company, and his energy and genius in the diplomatic field might have more than balanced the superior fighting qualities of the English.

The Truce of 1755 was not observed. The British fell almost at once into very grave trouble in Bengal, and it was con-

¹ A nephew of the famous John Law.

trary to human nature to expect that the French would not take advantage of their difficulties. In 1756 Surajah Dowlah attacked Calcutta and marked his victory by the horrible tragedy of the Black Hole. Clive was sent to deal with him and was for a moment himself in great danger. After an indecisive action however under the walls of Calcutta he persuaded Surajah to make an offensive and defensive alliance with him, and turned his arms against Chandernagore (the French capital in Bengal), which capitulated on 7 March, 1757. Meanwhile he had agreed with Meer Jaffier (Surajah's commander-in-chief) to depose Surajah Dowlah, and in the battle of Plassey (23 June) this treacherous ally played into Clive's hands. Plassey was a decisive battle. Meer Jaffier was made Nabob in Surajah Dowlah's place, and Bengal, Orissa, and Behar fell once for all under the domination of the British.

In the south and in Central India the year 1757 closed without much balance of advantage on either side. Bussy, Dupleix' ablest lieutenant, remained at Hyderabad and was virtual ruler of the whole Deccan. Had he taken up the mantle of Dupleix the star of France might not after all have set. Unfortunately the government sent out an Irish adventurer, Lally Tollendal, to take over the command. He arrived with a considerable naval force under d'Aché in 1758. Pocock, the English naval commander, immediately closed with the French ships and mauled them severely (29 April). Lally was active and enterprising and quickly captured Fort St. David (2 June): but he did not understand the natives and quickly committed the most unpardonable blunders. Failing in an expedition to Tanjore, he concentrated at Wandewash and seized Arcot. Had he at once advanced on Madras he might have made it very uncomfortable for the British. But he missed his opportunity and it was only in January, 1759, that he proceeded to lay siege to Madras, which was defended by Laurence and Draper. To assist Lally, Bussy had been removed from the Deccan. This was a very unwise step—the more so as Bussy and Lally could not co-operate. Clive from the north determined to take advantage of Bussy's removal

and pushed a force under Forde southwards to Masulipatam, which was captured by a very daring attack; by this capture British was substituted for French domination in the Northern Circars and Hyderabad. Meanwhile Lally had failed to take Madras, and in 1759 the British set to work to recover the territory they had lost in the neighbourhood of that town. This ended in a concentration against the French station of Wandewash; and Coote's great victory over the French at Wandewash (22 January, 1760) was the death-blow to the French power in India. On 15 January, 1761, Pondicherry capitulated and India was finally lost.

If we stop to inquire the reason for this failure where the prospects had once been so rosy, we shall arrive at these main conclusions: firstly, that there was shameful mismanagement at home, complete neglect alternating with misguided interference; secondly, that there was a stupid neglect of the importance of the command of the sea, and a failure to use the opportunities which la Bourdonnais had created; thirdly, that there were personal elements which told in favour of the British: this is not to say that there was anyone on the British side who was the equal of Dupleix or of Bussy, but even in these two great men there was a weakness which might have been fatal in the long run. They were too oriental themselves; they flung themselves into their parts with too much *abandon*; forgot that the brilliance and splendour with which they impressed the orientals were but gewgaws and in themselves nothing. They lacked in fact just the sense of proportion, the sense of humour, the insular detachment, which kept their British opponents constantly mindful of the fact that they were British and not Oriental. The game of impressing the Oriental is one which has to be played in India—it is still played by every modern Viceroy—but it must not be forgotten that it is a game. Dupleix forgot that it was a game and this is the weak point in his undeniably great character. Lally of course does not bear comparison—a flashy Irishman quite ignorant of the Oriental and quite unadaptable. With his arrival the superiority in the personal element shifted wholly to the British side. Apart from this

it must also be acknowledged that there was an utter lack on the French side of capable subordinates, whereas such men sprang from the earth in every direction on the British side. Laurence, Coote, Forde, Joseph Smith: the French could produce no one to face these men; and it was they who secured India for England and the lack of their like that lost her to France.

In order to complete the story of the loss of India it has been necessary to anticipate slightly. We must now return to the close of the year 1758. Choiseul, who succeeded Bernis in October, and who quickly became supreme in the Ministry, attempted to remedy the disasters already incurred by modifying the pledges which France had made to Austria and concentrating all available forces on the struggle with England. The Third Treaty of Versailles between France and Austria reduced the number of men which France was bound to provide and postponed the payment of the war subsidy to which she was committed; at the same time the promise of the Netherlands to Don Philip was revoked.¹ But Choiseul was unable entirely to withdraw from the European war; the operations of the Army of the Rhine continued and continued disastrously. Contades and de Broglie were completely routed on 1 August by Ferdinand of Brunswick in the bloody battle of Minden. But this was not the most serious reverse. The success of the policy introduced by Choiseul depended entirely on the operations of the fleet. He had conceived a great scheme for the invasion of England; but two crushing blows, in which the French fleet was completely ruined, dissipated his dreams. Boscawen destroyed the Toulon fleet (18 and 19 August, 1759), while on 20 November, in the wonderful action of Quiberon, Hawke demolished the Brest fleet. With these disasters vanished the last hope of snatching the colonies and India from the grasp of England. The year 1759 in fact was a fateful one for France; it had seen Montcalm's defeat and death at Quebec and Lally's repulse from Madras; Minden, Quiberon, Quebec—the army, the fleet, the colonies, and all in one year.

¹ Treaty signed March, 1759, dated 30 and 31 December, 1758.

But if France had suffered so also had Frederick the Great. On 12 August, in the Battle of Kunersdorf, he had been completely routed by the Russians and was only saved from the loss of his dominions by the infatuation of Austria for the recovery of Silesia. In 1760 the French military operations were rather more successful. A mad raid on Carrickfergus on 7 February, indeed, came to nothing, whereas an English expedition against Belle Isle in April resulted in the capture of that island. Cassel, however, fell into the hands of the French, to remain a constant sore in Frederick's side until its recapture, which was the last action of the war. Brunswick now conceived the idea of pushing on to the Rhine at Wesel, but was defeated at Korbach on 16 July; a minor French success was also recorded at Klostercamp on 15 October. Throughout that year Frederick was in extreme danger, menaced as he was on almost every side. He was only saved by the want of union between his opponents. This permitted him to win the Battle of Torgau (3 November, 1760), also that of Liegnitz over Laudon, but throughout 1760 and 1761 his position was highly precarious. The sudden death of the Czarina Elisabeth on 5 January, 1762, and the accession of Frederick's devoted admirer Peter freed him, however, from the most dangerous of his enemies.¹

Choiseul was by this time in despair. The destruction of the fleet left him no hope of bringing his policy to a successful issue. He was willing to fight on against Frederick for Austria, but he now desired a *rapprochement* with Spain, whose fleet would partially compensate for France's naval disasters, and if possible a separate peace with England. Pitt, however, rejected all advances on these lines. But it was out of his power to prevent the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish alliance, and on 15 August, 1761, the *Pacte de famille* was signed, an offensive and defensive alliance of the most absolute kind. This alliance, sensible enough in itself, was made too late. Spain might have been of some use had she been allied to France before the actions of Boscawen and Hawke. Her adhesion

¹ Catherine who succeeded Peter a few months later pursued a policy of strict neutrality.

at this juncture merely involved her in the ruin of France, and placed her colonial possessions, as well as those of France, at the mercy of England.

But already a great change had come over English politics. The accession of George III (October, 1760), Pitt's fall in October, 1761, and the advent to power of Bute heralded a pacific turn of policy, and on 3 November, 1762, the preliminaries were signed which afterwards (10 February, 1763) developed into the Peace of Paris. France restored Minorca and received in exchange the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon with fishing rights on the Newfoundland banks. She ceded, with certain small exceptions, the whole of her Indian possessions, her American Empire and Senegal; Spain paid for the Family Compact by having to cede Florida in order to regain Havana; and France compensated her for her loss of Florida by handing her Louisiana. On 15 February, 1763, the Peace of Hubertsburg between Prussia and Austria brought the Seven Years War to a close on the basis of the *status quo*, Frederick the Great retaining Silesia.

Louis XV had now reigned for forty-eight years; he was to occupy the throne for yet another eleven. That period divides itself into two sub-periods: from 1763-70, the ministry of Choiseul; and from 1770-74, the ministry of Maupeou, d'Aiguillon, and Terray (the "triumvirs"). Both periods are important; the first saw military and naval reforms and preparation for a renewal of the struggle with England, the ascendancy of Jansenism, the triumph of the *Parlements* and continual trouble between them and the Crown, continued financial difficulties, the acquisition of Corsica (1768), the falling in of Lorraine (1766), the Austrian marriage (1770); the second period witnessed a partial financial bankruptcy, the overthrow and exile of the *Parlements*, a great weakening of the European prestige of France, the general discredit of the ministry, and finally on 10 May, 1774, the death of the King. The whole of both periods was largely coloured by the religious troubles which had been chronic throughout the reign, and which had come to a head in 1761-2. Throughout the reign there had been fierce persecution of the Protestants. Three

specially cruel cases had occurred in 1761, 1762, and 1765, those of Jean Calas, Sirven, and la Barre. Jean Calas, falsely accused of murdering his son in order to thwart his conversion, was cruelly tortured and executed. Sirven was similarly accused but managed to escape through the intervention of Voltaire. La Barre was a mere boy who had insulted a procession of the Blessed Sacrament (and amongst other charges against him was one of having read Voltaire). He also was cruelly tortured and killed, the King refusing to pardon him. As Voltaire said, the *Parlements* had "made themselves cannibals in order to make themselves Christians". These shocking cases provoked much feeling in Europe, and, exposed as they were by Voltaire's mordant pen, they did great injury to the cause of religion. The curious thing is that, while the Catholic Church was able to persecute Protestants and unbelievers in this way, it was not able to protect the powerful Jesuit order from expulsion; this is convincing evidence that while religious feeling in France remained ardently Catholic it remained also keenly antagonistic to Ultramontanism. To follow the story of the fall of the Jesuits we must go back to 1761.

A certain Father la Vallette, of the Society of Jesus, a missionary in the Antilles, had involved himself in financial difficulties there and made financial default. A heavy claim was made, not against him personally but against the Order. The *Parlement de Paris*, before whom the case was tried, was violently Jansenist in its sympathies and held the Order liable (8 May, 1761), and, claims for upward of 5,000,000 *livres* being put in, the Order went bankrupt; on 6 August the *Parlement* decreed the suppression of the Jesuit Colleges. The King, who was favourably inclined to the Order, now intervened, gave a respite, and then attempted to effect a compromise (March, 1762). But in August the *Parlements* of the kingdom with a few exceptions, decreed the suppression of the Order and the King gave way. He tried to spare them as much as possible but he was overborne by the general hatred of the Jesuits. The expulsion of the Jesuits was a serious matter, because they had hundreds of colleges in France, and the education

of the country was largely in their hands. Little was done to replace these colleges, and the expulsion of the Jesuits was in the main destructive. It had been encouraged by Madame de Pompadour and Choiseul, by the latter for popularity, by the former from spite.

This event was an immense feather in the cap of the *Parlements*; they had triumphed not only over the Order but over the King, for it was in the teeth of the King's wishes that the attack on the Order had been carried to a successful conclusion. The period of the ministry of Choiseul is thus a period in which the ascendancy of the *Parlements* is very clearly marked, and their truculent opposition to reform becomes a menace to the State. To all financial measures which affected their own privileges they offered the most determined resistance, and the main responsibility for the financial debacle of the closing years of the reign lies at their door. It is the chief blot in the ministry of Choiseul, in other respects enlightened and progressive, that it encouraged rather than repressed the ascendancy of the *Parlements*, as it was the main credit of the succeeding government, in other respects reactionary and chaotic, that it dealt summarily with the obstructive magistracy. It was in the region of finance that the obstructive policy of the *Parlements* was most seriously felt. The Seven Years War put a terrible strain on the financial resources of the kingdom. Successive Controllers-General¹ in their attempts to impose fresh taxation were met by the unyielding opposition of the *Parlements*, and unfortunately resistance to taxation, however necessary, is always certain of a measure of popular support.

Silhouette, who took the Controllershship in 1759, made a vigorous attempt to abolish immunities, local as well as individual, and to check the peculations of the farmers of taxes. To meet the expenses of 1760 he had proposed a *subvention générale* which would have hit the privileged classes, and the

¹ Moreau de Séchelles	1754-56.	Bertin	. 1759-63.
Moras	. . . 1756-57.	D'Averdey	1763.
Boulogne	. . . 1757-59.	Terray	. 1769.
Silhouette	. . . 1759.		

franc salé, or exemption from *gabelle*, of certain privileged districts; he had also imposed taxes on various luxuries (amongst them the luxury of bachelorhood), and established a third *vingtième*. This sensible and comprehensive project provoked violent opposition, with the result that Silhouette had to have recourse to a partial bankruptcy and was driven from office (November, 1759). He was succeeded by Bertin, who withdrew the most unpopular of Silhouette's proposals, and imposed amongst other measures a third *vingtième* and an increase in capitation. On the close of the Seven Years War Bertin was confronted with a national debt of 1,713,000,000 *livres*. He was obliged to withdraw the *vingtièmes* (a special war-tax) and the increased *capitation*. His scheme for taxation for 1763 was once more met by the violent hostility of the *Parlements*, with the result that he was dismissed and the finance portfolio given to d'Averdey (13 December, 1763). D'Averdey's only financial resource was to heighten the already existing taxes. Thus one after another until 1763 the Controllers-General had been thwarted by the opposition of the *Parlements*, and the finances of the kingdom were rapidly going from bad to worse. This unfortunate financial deadlock continued throughout the Choiseul period.

While national finance was in this perilous state great events were afoot in the world of economic speculation. A new school of thought had arisen, and the extreme protection which France had inherited from Colbert was gradually moderated. The pioneer of this school was Gournay, the author of the expression *laissez-faire, laissez-passer*. To him was due the breakdown of the close monopolies in which industry was hermetically sealed. The monopoly of the van Robais at Abbeville, for instance, ended in 1767 with happy results, and in 1769 the suppression of the *Compagnie des Indes* heralded a great development of trade with the East. Gournay and the Economists were thus the precursors of Turgot, Calonne, and the advocates of a more extended free trade, both external and internal, which had its full development in the succeeding reign. Closely allied to the Economists were the "Physiocrats" who taught that, as land was the ultimate source of all riches,

it should bear all taxation. The pioneer of this school was Quesnay. The specious arguments of the "Physiocrats" won distinguished support, but provoked also the biting sarcasm of Voltaire. Economically their theories were ridiculous, but they had the effect of turning men's minds, amongst others that of Choiseul, to agriculture. Prices and rents were rising; there was money in agriculture; but, as always happens when prices rise, the wages of the labouring classes did not rise as quickly, and these classes reaped little benefit. A good deal of the very real distress that prevailed was due to this fact.

Choiseul meanwhile was busied with military and naval reform. He was a man of great distinction, a typical *grand seigneur*; not perhaps a statesman of the first rank, but a vigorous, intelligent man with a high ideal of the national honour. It was this ideal that made him contemplate a renewal of the war with England and drove him to apply himself to the restoration of efficiency to the army and navy. Peace was hardly signed when Choiseul commenced this work. He established military schools and introduced new disciplinary regulations: but his best work for the army was his reform of the artillery. In this he had the assistance of Gribeauval, one of the greatest authorities on artillery that ever lived. Under his direction the French artillery was gradually improved until it became the best in Europe. In the matter of the navy Choiseul found forty-four ships-of-the-line and ten frigates; he aimed at eighty of the line and forty-five frigates; when he was driven from office he left sixty-four of the former and fifty of the latter. In fact he built up the navy which was to give such a good account of itself in the American War. The object of these military and naval reforms was to prepare for a renewal of the struggle with England. This was the key-note of Choiseul's foreign policy, and to it he subordinated everything else. France remained motionless while Russia and Prussia were hatching their scheme for the partition of Poland and Turkey. Her one desire was to maintain the fatal and unpopular alliance with Austria, for without it war with England was thought to be out of the

question. It was in the hope of cementing this alliance that Choiseul negotiated the marriage of the heir to the throne with Marie Antoinette the sister of the Emperor (1770).¹ This ill-fated Princess came to France as the representative of a most unpopular alliance. She was unscrupulously and basely used by her brother as an agent in the game of fooling France into belief in the sincerity of Austria, while that power had time to join Russia and Prussia and to share with them the spoils of Poland. Both Choiseul and, to a greater extent, his successor d'Aiguillon were completely taken in by Austria. Choiseul's administration was marked, however, by two handsome territorial additions to France. In 1766 Lorraine fell in according to the terms of the Treaty of Vienna,² and in 1768 Corsica was purchased by France. Meanwhile war with England seemed imminent: a dispute between that country and Spain over the Falkland Islands was very nearly made a *casus belli*. But by this time the storm was gathering round Choiseul. An attack on his administration was made from within the ministry itself by the Controller-General, Terray; a strong party had grown up, headed by Maupeou the Chancellor, and Terray, which used the increasing truculence of the *Parlements* as a lever to remove Choiseul. He was accused of favouring the magistrates. The violent behaviour of the *Parlement* of Rennes had given point to these accusations. D'Aiguillon, a member of the extreme Catholic party and suspected of leanings to the Jesuits, was Commandant of Brittany, and as a protest against his behaviour the *Parlement* of Rennes resigned, arrested the *procureur général*, la Chalotais, on a charge of libelling the King in anonymous pamphlets, and called together a packed *Parlement*. The King threatened and scolded but in the end gave way, restored the *Parlement* of Rennes, and recalled d'Aiguillon (1766); but when the latter was accused before the *Parlement* of Paris Louis once more intervened and stopped the trial. All this threw the question of the *Parlements* into very strong relief, and in 1770 the King

¹ The Dauphin had died in 1765 and his son Louis, Duke of Berry, became heir to the throne.

² *Supra*, p. 317.

was confronted with the choice of either retaining Choiseul, declaring war on England, and putting up with the *Parlements*, or dismissing Choiseul, adopting a pacific policy, and declaring war on the *Parlements*. He chose the latter course and on 24 December, 1770, Choiseul was dismissed.

The three leading members of the Government which next took office were Maupeou (Chancellor), Terray (Controller-General), and d'Aiguillon (who went to the Foreign Office which he later combined with the Ministry of War). This "triumvirate" was committed to the policy of destroying the *Parlements*, and in January, 1771, the *Parlement de Paris* was exiled, and its functions made over to the *Conseil d'État*. Violent protests came from the princes, the nobles, the provincial *Parlements*,¹ and the *Cour des Aides*: but Maupeou proceeded unflinchingly with his reform. By an edict of 23 February, 1771, five superior councils were created at Blois, Châlons, Clermont-Ferrand, Poitiers, and Lyons to take over the judicial work of the *Parlement de Paris*: that body was restricted to questions involving the Crown and the Peerage, and retained its power of remonstrance and the registration of laws. Venality of offices and of justice was by the same edict abolished. The *Grand Conseil* was appointed to take the place of the old *Parlement*, and its seventy-five members were installed on 13 April. Thus was accomplished a reform which, had it remained untouched, might have greatly altered the history of the country. Maupeou's measure received support from such incongruous directions as the Jesuits and Voltaire: it provoked a great outcry from the affected classes as well as from the large party which still supported Choiseul, from the *noblesse* generally and from the provinces: an outcry which was too much for the weaker nerves of the Dauphin when he ascended the throne, but to which Louis XV turned a deaf ear.

Meanwhile Terray, who had been so critical of the finance of Choiseul, was himself in difficulties. The estimated deficit for 1770 was 63,000,000 *livres*, the arrears of debt 110,000,000,

¹ The provincial *Parlements*, which made common cause with the *Parlement de Paris*, were only partially abolished.

and the anticipations in the previous year 153,000,000. Terray made no attempt to approach the vital question of finance from its bases. He turned in every direction for temporary expedients: and his chief expedient was a repudiation of State liabilities by the reduction of the interest on the national debt. This drastic bankruptcy still further discredited the Ministry, which had already lost much of its support by its treatment of the *Parlements*, and which was also losing influence by the weakness of its foreign policy. The year 1772 saw the partition of Poland. France had hoped to prevent this event with the assistance of Austria for whose friendship she paid so highly. She remained blindly ignorant of Austria's duplicity until on 20 April, 1772, she was coolly informed by Mercy, the Austrian ambassador, that his Government was privy to a partition which had already been arranged. This rebuff and the continued encroachment of Russia in Turkey, which culminated in the Treaty of Kainardji (July, 1774), were grave humiliations to the prestige of France, and the successful checkmating of the designs on Sweden of Prussia and Russia was no adequate set-off. The attention of the French foreign office was in fact still concentrated on England. The alliance with Spain was maintained, and with the revolt of the English Colonies¹ the hour for the reopening of the outstanding questions between France and England seemed to be approaching. Louis XV, however, was not destined to witness the *dénouement* of the policy which his ministers had so long been following. On 27 April he fell ill: the disease proved to be the dreaded small-pox: he lingered till 10 May, when he died, a deserted and utterly discredited man.

¹ The Boston tea-riots took place on 24 December.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

LOUIS XVI

THE DEATH STRUGGLE OF THE *ANCIEN RÉGIME*

THE death of Louis XV raised a momentary hope that the long and dreary epoch of pompous insensibility had come to an end. Men looked to the King who now at the age of twenty ascended the throne to see if by good fortune he had something in him of his ancestor, Henri Quatre. The time was ripe—over ripe—for the advent of a man. Was Louis XVI fitted to lead his country to better things? It was soon apparent that he was not.

Louis Auguste, son of the deceased Dauphin, was not indeed devoid of good points. He united some of the virtues of the Leczinskis, the Bourbons, and the royal house of Saxony, with many of the deficiencies inherent in those stocks. In personal appearance he was Teutonic rather than French. Gross and clumsy in person, with a dull expression and a blotchy complexion, he lacked the dignity of the Bourbons. He was serious, devout, and of unblemished moral character (Leczinski virtues), and his taste for geography and mechanics recalls his great-grandfather Stanislas. On the other hand he was soft and idle, an immense eater and a heavy sleeper; moreover he was diffident and vacillating, desiring always to be led rather than to lead. With all the goodwill in the world he had inherited all his grandfather's distaste for business and all his insensibility. He never read a letter, was inarticulate in public, and would go placidly to sleep in council. His amazing diary shows that events of the most critical importance to his country and his dynasty were hardly noticed by him. As the Emperor cruelly remarked, he was "without form and

void"; and he had none of the *grand seigneur* qualities which had made Louis XV—vicious and inefficient as he was—tolerable to the nation. His whole bearing, his *gaucheries*, his heaviness, must have been insufferable to his people; for the French will forgive much to dignity and activity, to what they call *la panache*, but are unmoved by the simple *bourgeois* virtues. On the throne of France vice is almost immaterial, but want of dignity is fatal. Of all imaginable kings, therefore, this *bon bourgeois* was the least suited to preside over the crisis which was impending.

Unfortunate in so many things, Louis XVI was most unfortunate of all in his marriage. Marie Antoinette was the worst possible wife for him. Out of sympathy with a man whose every movement must have jarred upon her finer senses, alienated from him by the physical defect in him which for seven years prevented the consummation of their marriage, ill-educated,¹ out of touch with French life, remaining an Austrian when she should have become a Frenchwoman, the Queen had the supreme misfortune that by her virile character she dominated the King.² Without her Louis might have blundered along with the reformers until the goal of constitutionalism was reached, with her it was impossible for him to do so. Devoid himself of political vision, he accepted that of his consort; and she unfortunately misunderstood both the nation and the crisis, and when she was not playing the game of Austria was playing that of the reactionaries. She remained wholly insensible to the constitutional aspirations of the best Frenchmen and for ever ready to be moved by personal pique and her own likes and dislikes. Marie Antoinette's terrible fate and the fortitude with which she bore it have cast something of a halo round her, but in common justice she must be credited with a large share of responsibility for the disasters of the reign.

With the accession of Louis XVI we are on the threshold

¹ She could hardly write when she came to France.

² As Mirabeau once said ("Correspondance de Mirabeau et la Marck," ed. Bacourt, 1851, I. 38): "The Queen is the only man the King has"; and Napoleon described her as Louis' Prime Minister (Gourgaud, "St. Hélène," op cit. I. 406).

of a period in which events move with such extreme rapidity that it is desirable to have a clear conception of the general drift before we plunge into the bewildering chaos of changing ministries, dissolving public bodies, constitutions made and unmade, and political parties under conditions of violent change. Placing all these details on one side, let us consider the extraordinary course of events which in a few short years converted the absolute Monarchy of Louis XV into the Republic of 1792. No such change was deliberately planned by any body of politicians. For many years under the influence of the great writers, Fénelon, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, and a host of others, educated opinion in France had been gradually veering in the direction of constitutional reform, towards some kind of constitution, that is, which would admit educated Frenchmen to a share in the government of the country; and also towards the abolition of privilege and the removal of the obsolete and already rare incidents of feudal land tenure, in other words towards social as well as political reform. These aspirations were recognized in many quarters; but unfortunately, if recognized, they were not faced by Louis XVI himself. The King was chiefly occupied with the immediate and obvious task of dealing with the financial difficulties with which he found himself confronted, and with the necessity of overcoming the opposition of the *Parlement*,¹ which threw obstacle after obstacle in the path of financial reform. It was mainly as a weapon in his warfare with the *Parlement* that in 1789 he determined to summon the States General.

In taking this step the King and his advisers failed to reckon on the political and social aspirations of the people. To them the States General were a simple make-weight against the *Parlement* and there was no idea of granting a political charter or of giving the Estates a share in the government. This being so, far too much latitude was given them. They were encouraged to tabulate their grievances and, lacking all guidance from above, to work out their own constitutional position; so that instead of a financial council Louis

¹ We shall see, however, how he himself restored the *Parlements* whose captious opposition was destined to prove the great stumbling-block in the path of reform.

soon found that he had given himself a constitutional parliament. Such a parliament having come into existence there were only two policies—either to organize and trust it, or to dissolve it. With extraordinary perversity the King did neither the one nor the other. The Assembly, as the States General called itself, sat in constant fear of a *coup d'état* on the one side and of the mob of Paris on the other, and, in the absence of all control by the executive, that mob acquired its sinister influence on the course of events. Trusted by the King and relieved of pressure from Paris, the Assembly might have drafted a constitution acceptable both to the King and to the nation: mistrusted on the one side and terrorized on the other, it unfortunately drafted one which was acceptable to neither. Piece by piece the King saw the essentials of power, even the machinery for orderly government, slipping from his hands, and more and more he despaired of any good coming from the labours of the Assembly. Finally he fled, fled from the domination of Paris; but unfortunately towards the frontier, which gave colour to the idea—not by any means baseless—that he was conspiring with foreigners against his own country. He was arrested and brought back to Paris and forced to accept a constitution which, as he recognized, made his position impossible. The King's flight and the suspicion of his treachery gave the first breath to the republican party. From this time we have not only to deal with the bourgeois party (in power) and with the democratic party, but with a strong and growing body of republican feeling, not by any means identified with the democratic party, opposed as it was by many of the leading democrats, but at any rate as hostile as they were to the bourgeois ascendancy. That ascendancy appeared to be confirmed by the Constitution of 1791, for the limited franchise imposed by this constitution placed all power in the hands of the bourgeois. The Constitution of 1791 certainly rendered the monarchy impotent, but it also rendered the democracy impotent. From the moment of its acceptance battle was joined between the democracy and the middle classes.

The true policy for the Crown would now have been to throw itself loyally on to the side of the democracy, for

democracy is more favourable to monarchy than government by the middle classes. Many of the most advanced democrats clung to the idea of a continuance of the monarchy. Only the continued treachery of the King could have handed the victory to the republicans. Unfortunately Louis quite failed to grasp the situation and persuaded himself, or allowed himself to be persuaded by the Queen, that his only hope lay in an armed mediation from beyond the frontier. On the outbreak of war, in April, 1792, he was thus thrown into the impossible position of a king in alliance with his country's enemies. The outbreaks of 10 August and 20 September, 1792, were protests against this treason on the part of the King, but they were as much victories for the democrats as for the republicans, and involved the overthrow of the bourgeois ascendancy as much as the downfall of the monarchy. Above all they were a triumph for Paris, and from that time commenced the great struggle between France and the Capital, which cleft the democratic party in two, separating the Girondins from the Montagnard Jacobins, which was only partially put to rest at Thermidor, and which it remained for Napoleon to end by his "whiff of grape shot" at *Vendémiaire*. The hegemony of Paris is the great feature of the years 1793-4. To it may be traced the excesses of the Terror, which in their extreme forms were by no means essential either to the republic or to the democracy, and which were only tolerated because from the hegemony of which they were the fruit France derived that irresistible warlike élan which drove her enemies over the frontier and decided once for all that she had a right to settle her own affairs. With this summary of the broad outline of the period we may resume the thread of the narrative.

Because the revolution so overshadows the reign there is a danger of forgetting that Louis XVI occupied the throne for fifteen years before its outbreak. When we reflect that during those years France engaged in a war with England, in which she recovered much of her prestige; that her whole military and naval departments were reorganized; that she reversed her traditional economic policy and entered into commercial treaties with her neighbours, especially with England; that, under the skilful and cautious guidance of Vergennes, she

was able to maintain peaceful relations with her continental neighbours and at the same time (at least until the close of the period) to keep her position among the powers, and that all the time minister after minister was producing scheme after scheme of internal reform, we shall recognize that these are not years which history can ignore.

Leaving aside for the moment those questions of internal reform which led directly to the outbreak of 1789 we may deal with the history of these fifteen years under the following heads: (1) the reforms of the army and navy; (2) foreign policy; (3) economic and commercial policy. The ground thus cleared, we shall be able to turn to events which directly provoked the great crisis, the recall of the *Parlements*, the various reforms of Turgot, Necker, Calonne and Brienne, in which they attempted to deal with the internal and especially the financial situation, the causes of their failure, and how that failure led on to the Revolution. This work will be greatly facilitated if we have a clear understanding of the many changes in the ministry which occurred during the period. For this purpose a table will be found at the foot of pages 358 and 359. Even more remarkable than their strange evan-

	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780
<i>Chancellor</i>	Maupeou (to 1790)						
<i>Foreign Office</i>	Vergennes						
<i>War Office</i>	D'Aiguillon du Muy (5 June)	Saint- Germain (Oct.)		Montbarey (Sep.)			de Ségur (Dec.)
<i>Household</i>	la Vrillière	Malesherbes (July)	Amelot de Chaillou				
<i>Navy</i>	Bourgeois de Boynes Turgot (21 July) Sartine (24 Aug.)						de Castries (June)
<i>Controller</i>	Turgot		Clugny Taboureau des Réaux (with Necker as "Directeur général du Trésor")	Necker ("Directeur général des finances")			

escence is the solid worth of most of these ministers. Maurepas, indeed, who more than anyone else had the King's ear, was very old,¹ and as a politician very frivolous ; but Vergennes, who was at the foreign office for thirteen years, was a wise and cautious diplomatist, and steered his country successfully in difficult circumstances. Turgot, although he lacked the tact and elasticity of the highest statesmanship, was a reformer of immense, perhaps excessive, energy. Saint-Germain and Sartine were excellent administrators, endowed with the valuable faculty of choosing good subordinates and trusting them.² To Necker even more perhaps than to Turgot—though this has not been generally acknowledged—was given the chance of saving the State without recourse to violence ; and, but for the weakness of his master, he might have succeeded. Finally Calonne, who has usually been condemned as the man who directly provoked the Revolution, in point of fact almost succeeded in staving it off at the last moment.

¹ He was seventy-five when he became *premier ministre*.

² Malouet, the great constitutional reformer, one of the two heroes of the early stages of the Revolution, was associated with Sartine in the re-organization of the navy.

1781	1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789
						Montmorin (Feb.)		
						Breteuil (Aug.-Sep.) Comte de Brienne (Sep.)	Puységur (Nov.)	Broglie Saint-Priest La Tour du Pin (Aug.)
		Breteuil				Villedieuil		Saint-Priest
						Montmorin (Aug.) La Luzerne (Dec.)		
Joly de Fleury		d'Ormesson Calonne				Bouvard de Fourqueux (Ap.) Lomenie de Brienne (May) Villedieuil Lambert		

The task with which these ministers were confronted cannot be regarded as presenting overwhelming obstacles to men so able and sincere as Turgot, Necker, and Calonne. It resolved itself into the restoration of order to the finances, and that in turn resolved itself into the overthrow of privilege in matters of taxation. How was it that they failed to solve the problem? The answer is that the long period of personal government had caused the disappearance of all real statesmanlike qualities among the classes from which ministers were recruited. This accounts for the inelasticity and undue haste of Turgot, for the unreadiness of Necker, and for the contempt for public opinion that ruined Calonne. If we add to this the irremediable weakness of the King, the story of the failure is no longer inexplicable.

Following the programme which we have set ourselves, we may now turn to the reforms associated with the names of Saint-Germain and Sartine. Saint-Germain was a man of sixty-eight who had served in several foreign armies as well as with Saxe at Lawfeldt and Raucoux. He had also been through the Seven Years War, and more recently had been entrusted with the reorganization of the Danish army. He was a fierce critic of the existing military system of France, and a keen admirer of that of Prussia. In two years, aided by brilliant subordinates—amongst them Senhac de Meilhan, Gribeauval, the greatest living authority on the artillery, and Guibert, the great military writer and the originator of the tactical idea of the “mixed formation” afterwards adopted by Bonaparte—he was able to reform the French military organization from top to bottom. His first step was to cut down the largely ornamental *maison du roi*, and he then gradually proceeded to double the number of effectives.¹ In doing so he adopted the theories of Saxe by increasing the number of *chasseurs* and light troops, both cavalry and infantry. In 1777 the infantry was armed with a new musket made after the Prussian model, and this weapon remained supreme—the last word in firearms—until the close of the century. The artillery was also nearly doubled and Gribeauval’s reforms,

¹ Infantry raised from 90,000 to 168,000.

Cavalry ,, 25,000 ,, 46,000.

which comprised the standardization of the pieces and a great increase in accuracy, mobility, and range, made the French artillery the finest in Europe; and such it remained until the time of the Second Empire, when it was outclassed by the Prussian. It was in this army under these conditions that the great Napoleon received his training. Twelve military colleges were founded for the education of officers,¹ and these were thrown open to members of the *petite noblesse*; at the same time an arrangement was made for the gradual abolition of purchase. To Saint-Germain therefore belongs the credit of first breaking down the exclusiveness of the army. Nevertheless in 1788 the majority of the commissions were still held by members of the *noblesse*, and it is easy to guess what an effect the emigrations had on the discipline of the army. An ordinance of 22 May, 1781,² imposed the qualification of four generations of noble blood on all applicants for commissions. It did not apply to the artillery or engineers. Hence these branches of the service suffered much less by the Revolution than the cavalry and infantry.

Tactical reforms were also gradually introduced, the traditional French formation in heavy columns giving way under certain circumstances to the line formations which had been used with such effect by Frederick the Great. Three new *règlements* (army orders) of 1776, 1788, and finally of 1791 gave embodiment to the new ideas, not without effect in the early stages of the Revolutionary Wars. It is not surprising that these root-and-branch changes should have been unpopular. Nevertheless, when in May, 1777, Saint-Germain was driven to resignation, and was succeeded by a useless *roué* named Montbarey, the reorganization of the French military system was complete. When we come to treat of the successes of the French armies in 1792 and 1793 we must remember that it was the army created, armed, and trained³ under Saint-

¹ The most celebrated was at Brienne. A higher military college was also maintained at Paris. Napoleon studied in both of these.

² The ordinance was designed to keep out the idle and undesirable sons of the *nouveaux riches*.

³ This is not to say well trained. In point of training the allies had an undoubted superiority in the early part of the war.

Germain's system, and not, as is sometimes supposed, an untrained levy inspired by a miraculous revolutionary ardour, that held Europe at bay and rolled the allies back over the frontier.

What Saint-Germain did for the army Sartine did in a somewhat lesser degree for the navy, with the result that, when war was declared on England in 1778, the French navy was able to give a remarkably good account of itself. In anticipation of war with England great activity was displayed in the arsenals and yards, and the artillery improvements of Gribeauval were extended to the navy. Sartine did away with the interference of civilians in admiralty administration. He maintained with good results the qualification of noble birth for naval officers, but failed to popularize service before the mast, desertion remaining lamentably common. In striking contrast to Saint-Germain, whose reforms had only added about 1,500,000 *livres* to the war budget, Sartine raised the naval expenditure from 25,000,000 in 1776 to almost 169,000,000 in 1780. This was partially due to and justified by the American War; but even so it was excessive and it roused the antagonism of Necker, with the result that in 1780 Sartine was driven from office. His administration had not been free from mistakes, but he had accomplished a fine work for the French navy. His policy was well continued by Castries, and that of Saint-Germain by de Ségur, who went to the war office in 1780.¹ In 1778 the efficiency of the reforms that have just been enumerated was put to test in actual warfare, and in order to understand how this happened we must turn to the next of our heads: the foreign policy of the closing years of the *Ancien Régime*. The policy of France had for its key-note the desire to redress the loss of prestige which she had suffered in the Seven Years War. It was complicated by the alliance with Austria which dated from 1756. This alliance was greatly strengthened by the accession to the throne of Marie Antoinette, but it remained in a high degree unpopular. Marie Antoinette never forgot her Austrian extraction, and combined with the position of Queen of France that of Austrian agent at the

¹ He was responsible for the ordinance of 1781 (*supra*).

Court of Versailles. This not only made her unpopular but increased the unpopularity of the alliance, cause and effect becoming inextricably intertwined. Unpopular though it was, France could not afford to break off her alliance with Austria; it was necessary to the maintenance of her position in Europe, and Vergennes' policy was a perfectly correct one, to maintain the alliance without allowing himself to be drawn into schemes of Austrian aggrandizement. Unfortunately the Emperor Joseph's head was full of such schemes; Moldavia, Lorraine, Alsace, Venice, Bavaria, all were objects of his ambition; and he was also aiming at a vindication of Austrian hegemony in Germany. When, in 1775, Austria invaded Moldavia France protested, and the Emperor's visit to Paris in 1777 completely failed to move Vergennes, who began to make overtures to Prussia. Austria's occupation of Bavaria in the following year was received at the French foreign office with the utmost chilliness and, in spite of the efforts of Marie Antoinette, with a firm refusal of assistance.

By this time France had made up her mind to throw herself into the American War which had broken out in 1775. Vergennes, although he had encouraged unofficial assistance to the revolted colonists, had hesitated to go to the length of an open rupture with England. He was uneasy about European complications and desired to carry Spain with him. In 1776, however, Benjamin Franklin had visited Paris and French opinion was much moved in favour of intervention. In October, 1777, came the news of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, and in February, 1778, France signed a treaty with the United States and broke off relations with England. Immediate preparations were made for a descent on the English coasts; they came to nothing, but on 17 July a French fleet under d'Orvilliers fought a drawn battle with the English under Keppel off Ushant. In the following year Spain threw in her lot with the Americans (Treaty of Aranjuez, 12 April, 1779) and once more preparations were made for an armada. Once more they came to nothing, but the French fleet gave an excellent account of itself in the less conspicuous arena of the West Indies.

Vergennes, committed as he was to war with England and believing that the hour had come for France to avenge herself on her old rival, was deeply concerned at the prospect which now arose of war between Prussia and Austria on account of the occupation of Bavaria by the latter. It was a triumph for French diplomacy that this rupture was averted by dint of the joint intervention of France and Russia, which ended in the signature of the Treaty of Teschen (18 May, 1779). By this treaty Austria restored all that she had appropriated in Bavaria with the exception of Braunau and the "Quarter of the Inn".¹ Meanwhile the war with England continued. French and Spaniards besieged Gibraltar, but were unable to prevent the revictualling of the place by the English. Port Mahon and the Island of Minorca, however, were taken in 1782. In Indian waters the enterprise of the French Admiral, Suffren, recalled the days of Dupleix. In America Rochambeau led a French army to the assistance of Washington, which had its share in bringing about the capitulation of Yorktown (19 October, 1781). That ended the war.

In October, 1782, conferences between the belligerents were opened at Paris, but it was not until 3 September, 1783, that the Treaty of Versailles was signed. England recognized the United States and handed Minorca and Florida to Spain, which power had vainly demanded Gibraltar. France recovered Senegal and received Saint Pierre and Miquélon; the other conquests of the war were mutually restored, France taking Tobago in exchange for Dominica. The questions of fishing rights on the coast of Newfoundland were readjusted, and the humiliating provisions of the Treaty of Paris, which forbade the fortification of Dunkirk and provided for an English commissioner in that town, were revoked. Holland recovered all her colonies with the exception of Negapatam. Once more France had fought for prestige rather than for material gain. Vergennes, like Louis XV, had ignored the importance of colonial expansion, and the material rewards he secured were

¹ Viz. the lands between the Danube, the Inn, and the Salza: important to Austria because they were the link between the Tyrol and the Archduchy of Austria.

small when set against the outlay which France had made. In India Suffren's successes justified some recognition and received none. For a second time, therefore, France had made peace "*en roi non en marchand*".

Meanwhile Russia and Austria were once more conspiring against the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and in 1783 Russia seized the Crimea. Austria tried to persuade France to agree to a partition, but Vergennes answered with a firm negative. The advances which he made to Prussia, however, were coldly received, and all he could do was to use his influence to persuade Turkey to accept the inevitable and consent to some sacrifice. In this he was successful, and on 8 January, 1784, the Treaty of Constantinople was signed, by which Turkey handed the Crimea, Kouban, and the Island of Taman to Russia. Only by this humiliating concession was peace preserved in the East. Joseph's capacity for mischief, however, was by no means at an end. His next move was to demand from Holland the opening of the Scheldt, a proposal which greatly incensed the western powers. War seemed imminent. Vergennes, however, steadily resisted the appeals of Marie Antoinette, and ranged himself by the side of Holland, with the result that Austria, finding herself unsupported, signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau with Holland under the mediation of France (8 November, 1785). This was a great triumph for Vergennes, but it naturally left an unpleasant feeling of estrangement between the allies, a feeling which was by no means dissipated when a few years later the royal family of France were driven to look to the Emperor for assistance. Joseph was still brewing trouble. His ambitions were once more directed towards Bavaria. To get his way in that quarter he offered France the bribe of Luxemburg and Namur. Vergennes, who was intent on the preservation of peace, was too cautious to accept and replied with the very natural question: what would Prussia think? What Prussia thought was soon demonstrated by the creation, under Prussian auspices, of the *Fürstenbund*—a league of German princes directed against the encroachments of Austria (23 July, 1785).

England meanwhile was settling down to peace and com-

mercial expansion under the rule of Pitt, good feeling between France and England being greatly promoted by the commercial treaty of 1786, to which reference will be made immediately. France, too, having paid a tremendous price for the recovery of her prestige in the American War, was more and more anxious for peace; for the financial question was by this time monopolizing the attention of her government, and expense had to be avoided at almost any cost. Vergennes' last years were therefore occupied in a struggle to maintain peace in Holland and in the East. On 13 February, 1787, the minister died. His policy had on the whole been firm, judicious, and successful. If prestige was what France required he had certainly gained it for her in the American War, though some had since been lost by the hesitating peace-at-any-price policy he had been obliged to follow in his later years owing to the financial difficulties in which France was plunged. He had at any rate completely outplayed Joseph II, and had retained the Austrian alliance without allowing himself to be dragged into war for the aggrandizement of Austria.

Vergennes was succeeded by Montmorin, a somewhat timorous diplomatist who allowed France to be overridden in Holland by the English and Prussians.¹ In 1787 Holland was invaded by the Prussians, and France—to her great humiliation—feared to come to her support. This did her great damage in the eyes of Europe and lost her much of the prestige which she had acquired in the American War. In the same year the East was ablaze, Russia and Austria renewing the assault on Turkey, and again France was relegated to the humiliating position of a looker-on. With the increase in the financial tension and the imminence of a domestic crisis, paralysis was rapidly creeping over French foreign policy. From 1787 to 1792 she was almost a negligible quantity in Europe.

We must now turn to a brief examination of the economic conditions and policy of the country on the eve of the Revolution. There is plenty of evidence that the government and administrative officers were laudably active in this sphere

¹ Montmorin held office till 1791. He was one of the victims of the September Massacres.

between the years 1774 and 1789. No great agricultural advance, indeed, was made, and Arthur Young in his journeys through France (1787-9), although he occasionally praised the individual improvements of enthusiasts, took on the whole a despondent view of the agricultural condition of the country. It was otherwise with industry and commerce. Much was done to free industry from antiquated restrictions, and the introduction of machinery which now began was destined to work a greater change in social and economic conditions than all the bloodshed and turmoil of the Revolution. The era of capitalism had already begun. Internal commerce continued to be much hampered by artificial restrictions, which all the zeal of the reforming ministers was powerless completely to remove. Colonial and Indian commerce were, however, revived, and a new *Compagnie des Indes* was started in 1783.

Then began the period of commercial treaties. Vergennes was attracted towards free trade and established commercial relations with Sweden, Russia, and finally in 1786 with England. The celebrated "Eden" Treaty¹ was a new departure and one which did not endure for long. France is instinctively protectionist, and in this instance she was encouraged in her traditional objections to free trade by the fact that Sir William made an uncommonly good bargain. Very soon, under the iron hand of Napoleon, the tariff walls rose higher than ever before, and so remained until they were once more temporarily razed by Napoleon III. By the treaty of 1786 French wine, vinegar, and brandy were admitted into England on favourable terms. In return English iron, steel, and copper manufactured articles were admitted on corresponding terms into France. Cotton, linen, woollens, and drapery were admitted on equal terms into both countries, an arrangement greatly to the advantage of England, which had the larger trade in these goods. Articles of dress and luxury, in which France had the advantage, were subject to a high duty. The cheapness of coal in England already gave her an initial advantage over France, and this advantage was emphasized by

¹ So called because it was negotiated on the part of England by Sir William Eden.

the treaty. The Eden Treaty then may be regarded as an encouragement to French agriculture and a blow to French industry. Its immediate effect was to dislocate, and in some cases to ruin, industries, to congest the labour market, and to fill the towns, and in particular the Capital, with unemployed, who were destined to play a sinister part in the crisis of 1789. Meanwhile the approach of that crisis had been hastened by the failure of the several schemes of reform put forward by the ministers responsible for internal affairs.

Much has been made by writers on the French Revolution of the importance of the new philosophical ideas which were then in the air and of the effect of the writings of Rousseau and the *philosophes*, which prepared men's minds for sweeping changes and attracted them towards the assertion of imaginary rights and the creation of logical constitutions. These ideas, however, did not cause the Revolution any more than the Revolution established the Reign of Virtue which they professed to herald. Both the causes and the results of the great cataclysm were much simpler. It has been well said by a brilliant writer on modern France¹ that "all the doctrines of Rousseau and the *philosophes* would not have carried the insurrection beyond the walls of Paris and the great towns, but for the universal unhappiness throughout the length and the breadth of France caused by the fiscal system". This is undoubtedly true. Something was rotten in the State, and if it were not removed the whole body might be affected. That something was the fiscal system; not that France was subjected to a greater fiscal burden than she could bear, but that the burden was heaped on the shoulders of too few persons, and those the least able to support it. That there were political aspirations abroad is perfectly true, but they would never have carried men to the lengths of 1789, probably never have had an opportunity of carrying them to any length at all, but for the fundamental and universal and at the same time perfectly removable fiscal rottenness.

With a weakness that is dramatic in its promptness one of

¹ Bodley, "France" (ed. 1902), p. 79.

the first acts of Louis XVI had been to re-establish, in the very year of his accession (27 October, 1774), the *Parlements* which his predecessor had been at pains to abolish. Now, the members of the *Parlements* were persons who enjoyed privilege in the matter of taxation, and the majority of them had purchased that privilege in hard cash, and would therefore fight desperately before surrendering it. So from the moment of the recall of the *Parlements* privilege was entrenched in the only body that could claim any semblance of a constitutional position, in the only body that is that had any power of constitutional resistance. Thus at the very outset the Crown had saddled itself with a tremendous incubus in the struggle that was before it. The moment it produced its first scheme the importance of this incubus became apparent.

It was the new Controller-General, Turgot, who was responsible for this scheme. Turgot has been usually represented as the man who might have saved the monarchy and whose failure made the Revolution inevitable. That he was an able, disinterested, and daring reformer is true; but it is doubtful if he was exactly fitted by temperament for the exceedingly difficult task with which he was confronted. In the first place he was essentially dogmatic, full of abstract theories which he was determined to carry into practice wholesale. An ardent disciple of Quesnay and the Physiocrats, one of his most absolute doctrines was that of free trade; and neither free trade nor administrative decentralization, another of his hobbies, is congenial to the spirit of France. Had he been content to let these things alone he would have had a better chance of carrying the really essential reforms. But it was not in his nature to leave anything alone. He was a reformer with a cut-and-dried scheme, rigidly determined to carry it out in its entirety. Turgot had other temperamental deficiencies. He was lacking in the seductive arts that are essential to a reformer. He was not only an indifferent speaker but almost a recluse in his habits, while his religious scepticism rendered him obnoxious to the clerical party and distasteful to the King. A witty contemporary epigram represents him as "doing good badly whereas Terray did evil

well". It was in the main these faults of temperament that ruined the first effort at reform.

Turgot at once instituted the more obvious economies, suppressing useless offices and setting the accounts in order. Without legislation, by simply nursing the existing revenues, he actually showed a credit balance of 5,000,000 *livres* in the year 1775. It was when he turned to remedy abuses of taxation and to introduce social in addition to financial reform that his temperamental weakness came to light. The first steps were to abolish *contraintes solidaires*¹ for the *taille* (3 January, 1775), to suppress *corvées*, to lighten indirect taxes, and to make an inroad on the monopolies of the *ferme générale*. Internal free trade in grain was next restored (13 September, 1774). This created a great disturbance in commercial circles and provoked violent opposition. The failure of the harvest of 1774 led to a rise of prices in 1775, the unpopularity of which rebounded on to Turgot's policy. The minister stood firm and proceeded to extend freedom to the wine trade. His next proceeding was to abolish the privileges of guilds and *jurandes*:² that is to say he adopted Choiseul's policy of liberating industry from out-of-date restrictions. He next founded a bank (the *Caisse d'Escompte*), the first since Law's disastrous experiment. Then he produced a scheme of local government by which through a graded system of parochial, cantonal, and provincial assemblies, elected on a 600 *livre* landholder franchise, the existing system of parish assemblies was to be brought into touch with the central government. This scheme, which was admirable theoretically, erred by being too logical: it never came to anything; for by this time the reformer's energy had aroused opposition so vehement that the King was beginning to waver. The *Parlements* (27 October, 1774) at once set their faces against Turgot's reforms, in particular against free trade and the suppression of the *corvées* and guild privileges.

¹ *Vide supra*, II. 168. *Contraintes solidaires* may be traced back to Roman times.

² Every *Métier* elected two or four persons annually to look after the interests of the Craft and admit masters and apprentices. This was called the *Jurande*.

The King, however, registered the edicts in a *lit de justice* (12 May, 1776). But all the forces of reaction were gathering against the minister: the clergy who disliked his scepticism, the Queen for petty personal reasons, the commercial interests threatened by free trade, the privileged classes dreading an attack on their dearly bought rights, Maurepas himself who did not relish the share of unpopularity which he incurred. On 12 May, 1776, the King bowed to the storm and dismissed his minister.

All Turgot's work was immediately undone. Free trade ceased, the *corvées* were reimposed, the guild privileges restored. Clugny, Turgot's successor, only lived a few months. He was succeeded by Necker, a Genevese banker and a protestant, who was credited with immense financial ability.¹ Necker was a complete contrast to Turgot. Warned by the failure of his predecessor, he abjured all idea of sweeping abstract reforms. His position in the financial world enabled him to avoid increase of taxation and to pay for the American War by the dangerous expedient of loans, while remedying by degrees the abuses of taxation and administration which Turgot had tried to remedy wholesale. He continued the attack on the *ferme générale*, adjusted the incidence of the *vingtièmes*,² and reformed the *taille* by forbidding the arbitrary increases which had been customary in the *pays d'élection* (1780, a most useful reform). He also contrived a scheme of local government on the lines of the old provincial *états*, and, instead of imposing it generally, introduced it tentatively in certain districts only. It was Necker too that freed the remaining serfs on the royal domain, and the fact that the Government did not insist on extending this reform to the entire kingdom is proof of its extraordinary timidity. Being a protectionist Necker dropped his predecessor's free-trade schemes. But although he introduced all these excellent reforms he

¹ Being a protestant Necker was not eligible for the controllership and became *Directeur Général des finances* under a nominal Controller.

² The point about the *vingtièmes* is that legally they applied to the privileged classes as well as to others. The *privilegiés* escaped by falsifying their assessments. Necker's effort to remedy this falsification was somewhat half-hearted.

did not introduce the one reform that was really necessary. There was in fact only one solution of the financial dilemma. The expenses of government were not excessive for so great a kingdom : they could not be much cut down ; and yet the tax-payers were groaning under almost intolerable burdens. The true remedy was to widen the taxable area, abolish privilege in taxation, and so tap the wealth of the classes which could really afford to pay. Necker did not face this truth and preferred to resort to loans. Unfortunately the policy of borrowing involved the concealment of the extent of the financial disorders. Loans could not be raised on favourable terms if the condition of the Treasury was laid bare. In 1781 Necker took the unprecedented step of publishing a budget under the title of "*Compte rendu au Roi*," and it was not an honest statement ; it concealed the deficit and paraded a fictitious surplus of 10,000,000 *livres*. Thus Necker threw dust in the eyes of the public and laid up a store of difficulties for his successors. The *Compte rendu*, however, did its author no good, and on 19 May, 1781, Necker, who had for some time past been aiming at the position of *premier ministre*, followed Turgot into retirement. For the second time the incurable weakness of the King was made apparent by his failure to stand by his ministers.

For a short time, under Maurepas and Joly de Fleury, there was a period of reaction against all reform. The ministry of the latter was noteworthy chiefly on account of the imposition of a third *vingtième*. D'Ormesson, an honest mediocrity, succeeded Joly in March, 1783. In September peace was signed, and in November Calonne was appointed Controller-General. Calonne, like Turgot, was a member of the excellent service of *intendants*. He is generally painted as the man who squandered the last resources of the monarchy in the vain effort to keep up appearances. It is true that for a time he did do so ; but in doing so he only followed the precedent set by Necker. And it must be remembered also that what France wanted was not economy so much as reform ; and reform in the end Calonne made a bold attempt to give her. The annual deficit remained the crux of the situation, and in 1787 Calonne determined that it was impossible to go on

piling up the national debt, but that an attempt must be made really to tap the riches of the kingdom by bringing the privileged classes within the grasp of the tax-collector. He proposed, therefore, to make a frank statement of the condition of the finances and to bring forward measures for a *subvention foncière* or graduated land-tax, subject to no exemptions, and also for a stamp-tax. At the same time he proposed to abolish the *corvées* in favour of a rate (which, however, was not to fall on the privileged classes—a judicious sop); to establish provincial assemblies on the lines laid down by Turgot; to uplift the *capitation* and the *vingtièmes*, to reduce the *taille*, to abolish the internal *douanes*, and to set up a bureau for the redemption of the feudal rights of the clergy. Now it is all very well to jeer at Calonne (as Carlyle did) as a sort of political alchemist,¹ but this was by far the most comprehensive scheme of reform yet proposed, and the only one which had attempted to deal with the vital question of the *priviligiés*. It embodied the best of Turgot's and the best of Necker's measures, with the all-important addition of the land-tax which would have been a real solution of the financial trouble. If these measures could be carried the problem of the deficit would be solved; at the same time inequality before the tax-collector—the most galling of the injustices of the *ancien régime*—would disappear.

Calonne was not blind to the lesson of the falls of Necker and Turgot, and he determined to seek a make-weight against the *Parlement* in the form of an Assembly of "Notables". It has been maintained that he should have summoned the States General. But a States General, meeting as it would have met in separate orders, would only have played into the hands of the privileged classes; and the idea of Estates in which the *tiers état* should be doubly represented and all should sit and vote together, that is to say of a real constitutional assembly, only existed at that time in the minds of a few enthusiasts such as Lafayette, and had not penetrated to the ministry by any means. Calonne was therefore right in summoning Notables

¹ "Facile sanguine Controller-General with thy light rash hand thy suasive mouth of gold." Carlyle, "The French Revolution" (ed. Fletcher, 1902), I. 98.

rather than States General. But in his selection of the members of the Assembly of Notables his judgment failed. The privileged classes and the magistrates formed an immense majority, while the *tiers état* was scarcely represented at all. Moreover the Assembly was full of Calonne's personal enemies ; for he was curiously indifferent in this respect.

Calonne found himself confronted with a quadruple opposition among the Notables ; from the pure intriguers who desired his downfall as a step to power for themselves (chief amongst these was Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, who had the ear of the Queen) ; from the magisterial element, who resented the summoning of the Notables as an attack on the *Parlement* ; from all who enjoyed privileges and exemptions and were opposed to measures which threatened them ; finally from the small body of true liberals, headed by Lafayette, who desired to use the Assembly as a stepping-stone to liberal reform. These groups united in violent, and in the main uncritical, opposition to the ministerial policy, and received valuable support from the faction at Court, headed by the Queen, which was opposed to Calonne, and also from Miromesnil and Breteuil¹ in the ministry itself. The opposition concentrated on the proposed land-tax, which it condemned outright, demanding further information as to the state of the finances. It was suggested, in a purely factious spirit, that no assembly save a States General had the right to regulate taxation. This cry was taken up by Lafayette and pressed by him in all seriousness as a constitutional claim. It was, of course, rejected by the ministry.

As one by one his measures were emasculated Calonne got more and more irritated, and finally published a manifesto in which he warmly denounced the attitude of the privileged classes. But his bolt was shot. The Queen intervened, and with lamentable weakness the King yielded and dismissed his minister. Thus ended the third and most hopeful attempt at reform. Calonne had committed many indiscretions ; he had been brusque and tactless with the Notables, had not attempted to make a party for himself, and had omitted to ingratiate him-

¹ Breteuil was Minister of the Household.

self with the Court. He had been overthrown by the intrigue of the Court and the captious opposition of the privileged classes, but the fruits of his fall were to be reaped in the end by the little body of liberals who had been but an insignificant factor in the crisis. Calonne's fall made the States General the only alternative to bankruptcy.

The immediate profit of the crisis fell, however, as was natural, to the leaders of the opposition. After a short interval in which men of second-rate importance were promoted to office, Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, the ablest and most unscrupulous of Calonne's opponents, was introduced into the ministry. He was greeted on all sides, even by Lafayette, as a man of great talents. But in reality these talents were purely destructive; Brienne was undecided and had no policy; and all he did was to "posture and play tricks in the face of the bursting deluge". He used his power over the Notables to persuade them to agree to a loan of 60,000,000 *livres*, and then with cool impudence proposed the very measures which, when advocated by Calonne, he had so violently opposed. When the Notables not unnaturally declined to follow him in his *volte-face* he dismissed them. They had simply laid bare the nakedness of the monarchy without doing anything to clothe it.

Even at this eleventh hour if the King had taken his courage into his hands and insisted on the registration of the Calonne measures, which were still the adopted ministerial programme, in a *lit de justice*, the situation might have been saved. But Brienne believed that he would be able to persuade the *Parlement* to register the measures without recourse to this expedient. And indeed he succeeded in procuring the registration of the edict for free trade as well as one for an extension to the whole kingdom of provincial assemblies, on the lines laid down by Necker, and one for the conversion of the *corvées* (all of them measures which did not directly affect the privileged classes). But when he proposed the stamp-tax and the land-tax a violent opposition arose. It is quite clear that the conduct of the *Parlement* was simply reactionary, that it had no ideas of a constitution or of liberal reforms, but fought merely for its

own hand and against all legislation which would deprive the privileged classes of their privileges. And when, on 16 July, the first mention was made of a States General, it took up that cry in the full belief that a States General, if summoned, would be summoned in the old way by orders, and that the privileged classes would therefore command an overwhelming majority. The demand for a States General was formally advanced, and the *Parlement* refused to register the edicts. On 6 August, therefore, they were registered in a *lit de justice* amidst the violent protests of the *Parlement*.

The *Parlement* was then exiled to Troyes where it continued to protest. But Brienne was no sooner rid of the magistrates than he desired to have them back; he offered to withdraw the two obnoxious edicts if the *Parlement* would sanction the extension of the two existing *vingtièmes*¹ for a further period, and agree to their application to all forms of property. On these terms the exiled magistrates returned to Paris on 24 September, encouraged by the King's weakness to renew their opposition. Brienne now resorted to the old expedient of loans, and attempted to bring the *Parlement* to reason by acquiescing in the idea of States General to be summoned at some distant date. On 19 November decrees authorizing a large loan and giving civil status to Protestants were registered in the teeth of the *Parlement*. The Duke of Orleans, the King's cousin, protested and was exiled, and two magistrates were thrown into prison. All this was unutterably foolish. The show of firmness came at the wrong moment; and its opposition to the really unpopular Edict of Toleration brought the *Parlement* for the first time real popular support. By the close of the year the Crown was in a worse position than ever, and no nearer a solution of its difficulties, for the *vingtièmes* were quite inadequate.

We must take stock at this moment of a new factor not visible to the ministerial and royal vision, but which was none the less destined to be decisive. All this weakness and tergiversation, alternate violence and cringing, had not been

¹ The third *vingtième* imposed in 1782 (*vide supra*, p. 372) had been dropped in 1786.

without its effect on public opinion; and there can be no doubt that at the beginning of 1788 there had grown up a vigorous if still undefined aspiration after liberal institutions, which had been gradually concentrating itself round the idea of States General, an idea which had been used by the antagonists in the struggle without any thought of popular liberties or constitutional reforms. Brienne was blind to this trend of feeling and had now set his heart on becoming a second Maupeou and abolishing once for all the *Parlements* which had made such a laughing-stock of his ministry. If he thought seriously of States General it was only to assume that they would be likely to pass into the hands of the *Parlement*.

The *Parlement* continued its growlings and at last Brienne decided on a *coup d'état*. The *Parlements* were to be restricted to judicial functions and a new court called *Cour plénière* was to be established for the purpose of registering edicts. At the same time there was to be a general reform of justice, and this was inaugurated on 1 May by an edict abolishing torture. The vague promises of States General which had already been made were to be confirmed. The execution of this *coup d'état* was performed in the most bungling way, but on 8 May Brienne's proposals were laid before a *lit de justice* and registered. The "May Edicts" provoked much ferment in Paris, and infinitely more in the provinces, where the suppression of the *Parlements* was resented as an encroachment on provincial liberties—always jealously guarded. The protests were loudest in Dauphiné, where it was decided on the instance of Mounier to take the very bold and illegal step of at once summoning the provincial Estates. On 14 June the Estates of Dauphiné, thus summoned, met and elected Mounier Secretary. He drafted resolutions condemning the edicts, demanding States General and provincial Estates with the important stipulation that the *tiers état* should have double representation, condemning *lettres de cachet*, and insisting on the doctrine of consent to taxation. These resolutions passed, the Estates adjourned. The importance of their action was very great. They had shown what could be done with a little boldness and they had remained unpunished for their temerity.

It is not clear that the ministry was seriously annoyed. It regarded the demands put forward by the illegal Estates less as a menace to the royal authority than as a rebuff to the privileged classes against whom their quarrel was. These classes had all along concluded that the States General for which they were clamouring would be assembled on the old lines, and would assure a two to one majority for themselves. The demands of Dauphiné had revealed new possibilities, and the ministry was quite inclined to encourage the idea of a double representation of the *tiers* as a rejoinder to the *privilièges*. On 5 July, therefore, an *arrêt* was published inviting research into the history and attributes of States General in the past. This may have been a shock to the *privilièges*, but it was an unwise step; for it showed the want of determination in the government, the desire to be steered rather than to steer, and it encouraged people to look elsewhere for guidance. On 8 August the final plunge was taken, the date of the assembly of the Estates being fixed for May, 1789. It would have been better to have summoned them at once on lines laid down by the Crown; the interval was one of agitation and the financial situation grew worse and worse. To tide over these difficulties Necker was indispensable, and it became necessary to dismiss Brienne, who on 25 August retired from office, having done more than any other man to place the monarchy on an inclined plane.

Necker was probably the best choice Louis could have made. The confidence he inspired, in spite of the fact that he was a protestant, was very great, and his financial credit unbounded. Louis' mistake was not in appointing him but in refusing to conceal his invincible dislike for him. Necker had the misfortune in his second ministry to be distasteful not only to the King but also, and in a greater degree, to the Queen, who now hated him for having wrought the downfall of her protégé, Brienne. But, with or without the confidence of the King and Queen, it is doubtful if the minister was not foredoomed to failure. The transformation of public opinion during the ministry of Brienne had been complete. The prestige of the monarchy had been undermined by its power-

lessness against the privileged classes and its refusal to give a lead. The propertied classes had been alienated by the continued insecurity of the financial situation. The terrible hailstorms of 12 and 13 July, 1788, which devastated whole districts, enhanced the effect of a series of bad harvests and there was much unrest in the provinces. A grave commercial and industrial crisis had been provoked by the Eden Treaty which swamped France with English goods and temporarily ruined many of the large manufacturing towns; too much licence had been accorded to free speech and free writing; the decree of 5 July had evoked innumerable pamphlets; clubs with political objects had sprung up all over the country; liberal doctrines were beginning to gain ground. The resistance of the local *Parlements* to the May Edicts had evoked strong local sentiment in various directions. Necker, then, had to meet a new situation; his task was, not so much to fight the opposition of the privileged classes to reform, as to superintend the establishment of a constitution which in some form or another was now inevitable. But he was essentially a financier; he looked upon the States General as a financial expedient, and completely failed to grasp the importance of the constitutional problem. To use the words of Arthur Young: "he had the greatest opportunity of political architecture that ever was in the power of man . . . he missed it completely, and threw that to the chance of the winds and the waves to which he might have given impulse, direction, and life".

Necker's first step was to abandon Brienne's measures, and restore the *Parlement*. That body at once showed its hand and sealed its fate by declaring itself in favour of States General with *vôte par ordre*. This declaration was fatal to its popularity, and from that time forward it ceased to be a factor in politics. Necker then, for no good reason, reassembled the Notables, who followed the lead of the *Parlement*, and were like them dissolved (12 December). Conflicting advice continued to pour in, and Necker adopted the fatal line of allowing things to adjust themselves. In his "*Resultat du Conseil*" he recommended the double representation of the *tiers*, an arrangement which without *vôte par tête* was

useless (27 December, 1788). Beyond this, however, he would not go, and under these conditions the elections to the States General were completed in the early days of 1789. Nothing could have been more unwise than this policy of drift. It meant that the States General would have to fight for their own liberties, and this in turn meant that they would be more exacting in their demands than they would have been had the Crown made reasonable concessions at the outset. "If you cannot fix their ideas you may expect irremediable disorders," said Malouet,¹ the wisest of Necker's advisers. And Necker did nothing to fix their ideas. "Let nothing be done," says the same adviser, "without your orders or otherwise than by your direction." Necker gave no orders and issued no direction. The elections were thus begun under the worst possible auspices. Everything was in a state of flux; there was no sense of guidance or control; the regulations which had been reimposed on the corn trade were having their usual mischievous result, and the hard winter had added to the unrest.

To glance back over the years of Louis XVI's reign. The King had given repeated proof of benevolent intentions; his popularity was great. He had carried on a successful war; his reign had seen a considerable increase in prosperity; he had concluded an important commercial treaty with England; he had been blessed with a galaxy of able ministers: Turgot, Necker, Calonne, Vergennes. The financial trouble could be traced to the incidence rather than to the amount of taxation. With Calonne Louis had embarked on the crusade against privilege which would have ended this trouble. He had been met by the captious opposition of the *Parlement* and Notables and, instead of boldly overriding these bodies, had allowed them to reap credit by falsely posing as checks on absolutism. Thus he had had the States General forced upon him by the privileged classes. He now desired a States General for use in his campaign against privilege; but he did not see that he could not summon such a body without giving it powers that would make it also a constitutional body. He thought he could have one without the other, never realized the approach

¹ "Mémoires" (1874), I. 225.

of constitutional change, and embarked on the wretched policy of half measures which has been described, hoping fatuously that the States General would fight his battle against the *privilegies*, re-establish the finances, and then abdicate. This was the last thing that it was likely to do. As a matter of fact nothing was more clear than that a strong demand would be made for constitutional reforms. The excitement continued intense, and many pamphlets of a violent nature appeared. Necker remained oblivious, serenely confident in his ability to ride the whirlwind, but so undecided, so prone to see every side of every question, that he could do nothing effective.¹

The elections to the States General had been regulated by an edict of 24 January. The franchise had been made very wide.² For the Third Estate every taxpayer (and of course the humbler classes were essentially taxpayers) voted in the primary assemblies which roughly followed the parochial areas. The electors chosen in these assemblies chose the electors of the *baillage* or *senéchaussée*, who in turn elected the deputies to the States General. By this elaborate process 285 nobles, 308 clergy, and 621 representatives of the *tiers état* were chosen. Two-thirds of the clergy were *curés*, which meant that the union of the Orders would at once give a majority to the *tiers état*. In the *tiers état* sat a few nobles, including Mirabeau, and a few ecclesiastics, including Sieyès. More than half were lawyers. The States General was a half-educated, respectable body, wise in its own conceits, ready with its panacea for every ill, vain of its position, and jealous of its rights; inexperienced and prone to disregard precedent, and to be carried away by sentiment or eloquence, above all sensitive to every breath of popular opinion.

¹ See Malouet, "Mémoires" (1874), I. 219, 220, 221. Malouet's "Mémoires" are the most convincing proof of the abject folly and incapacity of the King's advisers. Malouet clearly saw their blunders and the dangers into which the State would be drawn, and warned them but without effect. The value of the "Mémoires" is considerably lessened by the fact that they were not compiled by the author until 1808. They were first published in 1868.

² Much wider be it noted, than the franchise decreed by the Constitution of '91.

According to ancient precedent each electoral unit had furnished its representatives with a *cahier* of grievances extracted from those of the lower electoral bodies. It has been said that the National Assembly did nothing that was not suggested in some one or more of the *cahiers*; as the *cahiers* demanded practically everything this is not surprising. Every elector in France had been directly invited to grumble. The *cahiers* of the *tiers état* put forward a strong and practically unanimous demand for a Constitution; for *vôte par tête*, which was practically a Constitution in itself; for regular States General with definite control over taxation; for the separation of Legislature and Executive, the former to be entrusted to the Estates and the latter to the King acting through the Ministers whom he appointed. There was also a strong demand for local government on democratic lines, for liberty of the subject, and the abolition of *lettres de cachet*; for uniformity of taxation; for judicial reform, very badly needed and twice already attempted. The abandonment of privilege in taxation was a general demand not only in the *cahiers* of the *tiers* but in many of those of the privileged Orders; it was one to which the King was of course ready to agree. The surrender of feudal rights was also strongly demanded by the *tiers état*, and the militia system was condemned. Taken all together the demands went too far. Such a programme could only have been executed by slow degrees, and it was a terrible mistake deliberately to evoke this expression of grievances; it encouraged the Assembly to legislate too fast, and it made the people imagine grievances which did not really exist, and to exaggerate those which did. It would have been far better to have rejected the *cahier* system, to have caused the deputies to be elected with senatorial attributes, and to have laid before them a wide but practicable scheme of social and political reform. Such a policy, however, was utterly beyond the capacity and imagination of the King and his advisers.

The States General, therefore, assembled under conditions which thinkers such as Burke, Arthur Young, Malouet, and Raynal recognized as dangerous in the extreme. Malouet had repeatedly advised Necker to perform his obvious duty of

leading. But he did nothing. In the absence of leadership the Estates could not but realize the weakness of the Crown and Ministry. Armed with a vast catalogue of grievances they had been called to Versailles (of all places), at a moment when Paris was crowded with hungry unemployed at the close of a hard winter, and when the city was seething with sedition. The fact that they received no guidance, and that their constitutional position was all to win, threw them from the outset into an attitude necessarily in some degree antagonistic to the Crown.

On 2 May the deputies appeared at Versailles. And on the following day they heard Mass and a sermon from the Bishop of Nancy. The preacher was much applauded when he referred to the injustice of the fiscal system. After these preliminaries, on 5 May, the Estates were opened in the *Salle des menus plaisirs du Roi*. The King was well received and Necker made his long-looked-for pronouncement. This was his great opportunity, and if he had used it well he might even then have saved the situation. As Mirabeau said: "If Necker were an able scoundrel, he would have in eight days all the taxes and loans he could possibly wish and we should be dismissed on the ninth; if he was a man of character, he might be the Saviour—the Richelieu—of the Crown and Nation".¹ He was neither; he met the States General with no real appreciation of the crisis; he seemed to have no cognizance of the aspirations of the *tiers état*; he made no allusion to the question that was uppermost in their minds—that of *vôte par tête*; his speech, which lasted three hours, was a failure. "No great leading or masterly views," says Arthur Young in his trenchant criticism, "no decision on circumstances in which people ought to be relieved and new principles of government adopted. It is the speech you would expect from a banker's clerk of some ability." It finally showed the *tiers état* that they need hope for no guidance from the minister and that they would have to work out their own salvation.

Their primary object was to repudiate the position which

¹ "Correspondance de Mirabeau et le Comte de la Marck, 1789-91" (ed. Bacourt, 1851), I. 350.

was being thrust upon them of one of three Orders. They therefore refused to constitute themselves until they had verified their powers, and this they declared could be only done in a joint meeting of the Orders. For many days futile negotiations passed between Nobles, Clergy, and *Tiers État*. The ministry was greatly alarmed at the behaviour of the *Tiers* who, sitting in a large hall, were encouraged by the passionate applause of the public to go farther than they might otherwise have done. On 10 June, as nothing had come of the negotiations, the *Tiers*, on the motion of Sieyès, whose first appearance it was, and who was the author of the theory that the Commons *were* the nation, formally invited the clergy and *noblesse* to join them, otherwise they would constitute themselves the States General of France. On the 12th they elected Bailly provisional president and on the 13th three Poitevin *curés* took their seats amidst a "kind of madness of applause". Thus encouraged, the *Tiers* (or Commons as they had preferred to call themselves) discussed the question of what name they should assume. After much debate it was agreed to use the name "National Assembly". This was a misfortune, for to a certain extent it prejudged the question of two chambers. The wiser heads—Malouet, Mounier, and Mirabeau—regarded the action as precipitate. The motion was carried by a large majority but one which would have been much smaller if it had not been for the intimidation which was brought to bear on the deputies from outside: Mirabeau, with one eye on public opinion, declined to vote. After this (17 June) the die was cast; the Assembly had burnt its boats. Its behaviour had been utterly illegal; and it knew it and expected at any moment to be dissolved. To forestall its dissolution it cleverly voted that taxes should only run until the dissolution of the Assembly, that the public debt should be immediately considered (this to propitiate the propertied classes) and that the question of the food-supply of Paris should be inquired into (this to quiet the mob). The boldness of the Assembly had its reward; it decided the clergy at last on 19 June to unite with the *tiers*.¹ The King,

¹ One hundred and forty-nine more clergy taking their seats on that day.

who had been plunged in grief by the death of the Dauphin (4 June), was at length roused to the dangers of the situation ; and it was decided that he should now take the step which should have been taken at the outset of propounding a charter to the Assembly. With this object it was arranged to hold a *Séance Royale*. The hall of the *menus plaisirs* was required for the *séance* and very foolishly, though probably by a sheer oversight, no proper notice was given to the Assembly. So when on the 21st the deputies assembled it was to find the doors shut and the hall given over to tradesmen. Sensitive as they were, they immediately concluded that a *coup d'état* was meditated. Adjourning to a neighbouring tennis-court, they took one by one an oath "never to dissolve except by their own consent, and to consider themselves and to act as the National Assembly, let them be wherever violence and fortune might drive them". This was the famous "oath of the tennis-court," which, as Arthur Young¹ said, "converted the Assembly at one stroke into the Long Parliament of Charles I". On the 22nd the Assembly was joined by the bulk of the clergy and even by two of the nobles.

The closing of the hall without notice was not the only tactless blunder made by the Government. Versailles was filled with troops for the occasion, and this prejudiced the deputies against the royal proposals before they had even heard them. It was amidst an ominous and unwonted silence that the King on 23 June proceeded to the Assembly. The very first clause dashed the hopes of the Constitutionalists and condemned the entire charter in their eyes. With certain modifications the distinction of the Orders was to be maintained. The most important of the other clauses were those which provided for financial reform and annual budgets (IV-VII); that which announced the King's willingness to sanction the abolition of privilege in taxation ; the abolition of the *taille* and *franc-fief*; the abolition of *lettres de cachet* under certain reasonable limitations. The revival of the provincial Estates, the re-enactment of internal free trade, the alleviation of the *gabelle* and of the *aides*, the reform of justice, the abolition of

¹ Young, A., "Travels in France" (ed. Betham-Edwards, 1906), p. 172.

the *corvée*, of *mainmorte*, and of serfdom ; the reform of the *capitaineries* (hunting reserves), and of the militia ballot.

Such was the last word of the *ancien régime*. Was it or was it not a scheme of reform such as the Assembly might have accepted ? Men of sense at that time and since have held that it was. Arthur Young, for example, believed that it conceded the essential points.¹ Mirabeau, who denounced it violently in his journal at the time, afterwards declared that had the same reforms been more tactfully put forward they would have "laid the nation at the King's feet".² With all respect to the judgment of these great men it is difficult to maintain that the declaration of 23 June was really an acceptable charter. On the whole the surrender was one of prerogative rather than one of privilege ; for the first time the King identified himself with the aristocracy. Above all, France was left without a Constitution, and many of the reforms conceded were vitiated by reservations. The right of consent to taxation was stultified, for instance, by the reservation that the King might in case of emergency raise a loan of 100,000,000 *livres* without consent. The declaration that tithe and feudal rights were property was just but unpopular, and it should have been accompanied by a scheme for their redemption. The conclusion is that though many valuable reforms were adumbrated none were actually enacted nor was there any guarantee that they would be enacted, and the entire scheme was vitiated by the relegation of the *tiers état* to the position of one of three Orders. The time for such a proposal was long past. And if the charter was inadequate the circumstances of its delivery had been unfortunate in the extreme.³ The phraseology was inconciliatory, and the presence of the troops pro-

¹ Young, *op. cit.* pp. 343 *sqq.* Gouverneur Morris, Jefferson, Young, Mirabeau, Sieyès, all acknowledged at one time or another that the charter of 23 June was adequate.

² "de Correspondance Mirabeau et le Comte de la Marck," *op. cit.* pp. 125 *sqq.*

³ Duvergier de Hauranne truly says of the *Séance* of 23 June, "it displayed all the odious machinery of a *lit de justice*" ; and of the charter, "despotic in phraseology, it came too late and was too imperious" ("Histoire du Gouvernement Parlementaire en France," 1857-1871, I. 34, 35).

vocative. Worst of all the scheme was propounded in the absence of the principal minister. Necker was not present at the *séance*. The fact was that there had been a considerable ministerial crisis. Necker's proposals had been of a more sweeping nature than those actually put forward ; above all they had included *vôte par tête*. But he had been fiercely opposed by the reactionaries at Court, of whom Artois was the ruling spirit, and who had the support of the Queen. And they had carried the day : so that the proposals were not really Necker's. Under these circumstances it would perhaps have been more honourable for the minister to resign : but Necker, who revelled in office, contented himself with staying away from the *séance* : his abstention went far to discredit the proposals.

After the *séance* the King left the hall followed by the nobles and the bulk of the clergy. The *tiers état* remained in their seats (after all the *Salle* was their appointed meeting place). Brezé, the grand master of the ceremonies, pointed out to Bailly that they had been ordered by the King to withdraw. Mirabeau flashed out with the reply that only bayonets would make them do so. The King, however, had no intention of using bayonets : and the fact that he allowed the Assembly to defy him in this way goes far to prove that a *coup d'état* had never been in his mind, though it may have been part of the plan of the extremists at Court. The Assembly passed a resolution declaring its members inviolable, and from the 23rd to the 27th sat in constant fear of the bayonets which it had defied. The King's weakness and the Assembly's firmness had the inevitable result. People began to think for the first time that the Assembly would really be victorious, and on the 24th the majority of the clergy took their seats ; they were followed on the 25th by forty-seven of the *noblesse* headed by Orleans. Thus the question of *vôte par ordre* solved itself. The King accepted his defeat with equanimity. His blow of the 23rd had utterly miscarried, and on the 28th, following Necker's advice, he sanctioned the union of the three Orders which four days before he had forbidden. The Constitution was won, and in the eyes of all Constitution-
alists the main work of the revolution was complete.¹

¹ Necker had tendered his resignation but was persuaded to withdraw it.

After this there were only two possible courses for the King; either to dissolve the Assembly, or to create a strong party within it and endeavour to dominate or at least to guide it. But above all it was necessary to get the Assembly away from the influence of Paris. At Versailles it never debated without an audience of at least 600. Paris was replete with the scum of France, drawn thither by the special treatment she received in the matter of food and by the gold which was flying about—no one quite knew whence it proceeded, but Orleans was suspected—and driven there by the industrial dislocation resulting from the Eden Treaty.¹ To make matters worse, disaffection was spreading among the troops. In June one of the two regiments which were quartered in Paris—the *Gardes françaises*—was in almost open mutiny, and when some of the ringleaders were imprisoned the mob released them, and, urged by the Assembly, the King confirmed their release. Thus in June, 1789, there was no real authority, civil or military, in the city. Incendiary speeches, publications, and placards abounded. Political clubs were being formed and political newspapers printed. The Electoral Assemblies—i.e. the electors chosen by the primary assemblies to elect the deputies of the *tiers état*—whose duties had ended at the conclusion of the elections, had continued to sit, another proof of the utter impotence of the Government; and they gave a

¹ The truth as to the relations of the Duke of Orleans with the early revolutionaries is not easy to unravel. On the whole the facts seem to be as follows: (1) That the Duke was the personal enemy of the King and Queen, who cordially reciprocated the feeling. (2) That he therefore readily identified himself with the opposition. (3) That he was a mere debauchee, with no political instincts, and an incurably flighty disposition, so that, although he no doubt vaguely hoped to profit by the political crisis, and was always hovering round at the various "journées," he was never really the prime mover in a definite plot to dethrone the King and take his place. (4) That it was, nevertheless, inevitable that the eyes of politicians should turn to Orleans as a possible Lieutenant-General or even Regent. The idea certainly passed through Mirabeau's mind. The Duke's shuffling character, however, prevented matters going farther. Napoleon I, who had his information from Rœderer, believed that if there was an "Orleans plot," Orleans himself was not privy to it. (See Gourgaud, "St. Hélène," op. cit. i. 346, and Acton, op. cit. pp. 135, 136.)

rendezvous to all would-be politicians. The municipality was entirely overshadowed by them.

And it was not only in Paris that anarchy prevailed. All over France there was riot and disorder; the authorities, taking their cue from above, abstained from intervention and much havoc resulted. It is difficult to forgive the government for abdicating its primary duty—that of protecting life and property. It was during the summer of 1789 that the moderate majority, deserted in this way, learnt to accept the dictation of the incendiary minority, with disastrous and far-reaching consequences. The Assembly was even more to blame than the government; for when troops were tardily concentrated to overawe the turbulent mob in the capital, it at once assumed that its liberties were threatened, and at the instigation of Mirabeau demanded their withdrawal. The Assembly was in fact in a highly equivocal position. If it countenanced the assembling of troops, these troops might be used against itself; if, however, they were withdrawn, order in Paris was at an end, and the Assembly was condemned to work under the influence of the coarsest intimidation. As a matter of fact there was probably a party at Court which hoped that in the end the troops would be used against the Assembly, but their primary use was to restrain the Paris mobs during the crisis which was sure to be provoked by the dismissal of Necker. For Louis had decided to take this step. He assured the Assembly that he had no intention of using the troops against them, and at the same time made the very sensible suggestion that both he and the Assembly should move farther from Paris. On the same day Necker was dismissed, and Breteuil, a member of the reactionary party, recalled. On the ground that it heralded a *coup d'état* Necker's dismissal provoked a sensation out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance. The train had been well laid in the capital and everything was ready for an outbreak. The theatres were closed on receipt of the news. The mob in the Palais Royal was worked up to fever heat by the rhetoric of Camille Desmoulins, a young journalist afterwards to become famous, and there was a loud demand for arms.

The best evidence of the innocence of the King is the behaviour of the troops. Instead of dealing with the rioters as they should have been dealt with, they behaved with foolish forbearance; for the officers had no orders except to avoid bloodshed. Lambesc dispersed one crowd, but in the mildest possible fashion, and Paris was very soon evacuated—an act of treason to all the respectable citizens, whose lives and property were thus placed at the mercy of the rioters. The bourgeois, thus deserted, did what they could to preserve order by organizing themselves into a kind of special constabulary, but the central assembly of the electors, which was now sitting in conjunction with the municipality at the Hôtel de Ville, was constrained to give up the arms which were stored there. The night was a terrible one. Next day the District (or primary) Assemblies were summoned and, sitting with the municipality, appointed a committee to organize a civic guard, a suggestion which had already been made by Mirabeau. By this means a degree of order was secured.

But on the morning of the 14th the mob marched to the *Invalides*, a pensioners' hospital, and seized the arms stored there, while a second body proceeded to the Bastille with a similar object. The Bastille was a state prison and though it was garrisoned¹ it was not victualled. The Governor, de Launay, had no instructions, and was forced by his subordinates to negotiate; but while he was negotiating the mob penetrated into the inner court and was fired upon by the garrison. There was no treachery, only much confusion and contradictory orders. De Launay's mistake was in attempting to negotiate with an undisciplined and leaderless mob: he should either have surrendered at once or offered an uncompromising resistance. As it was he was persuaded to surrender after the mob had been thoroughly roused. On the way to the Hôtel de Ville the unfortunate Governor was murdered—a fresh victim to the King's culpable weakness in withdrawing the troops. The same evening Flesselles, the Provost of the Merchants and head of the old Municipality, was shot. If, as

¹ The garrison comprised eighty-two *invalides* and thirty-two Swiss; there were thirteen canon.

it was said, he had tried to persuade de Launay to stand firm, so much the better for his memory. Firmness under the circumstances was a duty not so much to the King as to the law-abiding citizens of Paris. These events, which seem to have been quite unforeseen by the King, utterly dumbfounded him. The Assembly had sent repeatedly to demand the withdrawal of the troops and the recall of Necker. On the 15th Louis saw that he must give way and recalled the minister. If the King's policy had failed that of the reactionaries had failed to a much greater extent. The fall of the Bastille registers the elimination of the *ancien régime* party. Their bolt was shot and many of them, including Artois, left a country where they realized there was no place for men of their political convictions.¹

The taking of the Bastille was not a great feat, but it marks a great epoch. It was a dramatic symbol of the downfall of absolutism. More than this, it was the first great triumph of the forces of anarchy masquerading in the sheep's clothing of constitutionalism. The riot had been distasteful to the peaceable citizens of Paris and also to the Assembly which had repeatedly deprecated the idea of disorder. The formation of the bourgeois guard, which afterwards developed into the National Guard, was the answer of the Moderates to the Anarchists; if that guard could be kept pure and efficient it might serve the double purpose of protecting the Assembly and maintaining order in Paris.

If Necker had been a man of initiative he might have used his great popularity to guide affairs into a better channel. But he did nothing at all, and it was not on his advice but on that of Bailly, the President of the Assembly, that Louis decided to show himself in the Capital (15 July). But the King was ill-qualified to make an impression on a public occasion. He was persuaded to sanction the bourgeois guard and to nominate Lafayette as its commander, and at the same time to ap-

¹ Mr. Bodley (op. cit. p. 184) has some interesting comments on the first emigration. He urges that the *émigrés* have been too harshly judged. Prior to the Revolution patriotism was simply loyalty to the Crown, and this patriotism they (wrongly, but not unnaturally) judged could best be developed by joining the foreign enemies of the Revolution.

point Bailly mayor of the new municipality, that is to say of the Assembly of Electors who had taken over the municipal functions during the disturbances. Neither appointment was a good one. Bailly was not sufficiently a demagogue to dominate Paris. His task of feeding the capital was rendered doubly difficult by reason of the dislocation of trade which followed on the collapse of the administrative system in the provinces. Lafayette was one of those men who had it in their power to control the Revolution, and who failed to do so because they were ready to do violence to their principles in order to retain power. He feared to lose popularity by employing force on occasions when it was his duty to do so; and because he was not entirely sincere he was fated to see the Revolution take a course which he deprecated and which, if he had been true to himself at first, he might have prevented. In point of fact he tried to make the National Guard (as it was now called) play an impossible double rôle. If it was to restrain anarchy it must be kept undemocratic, if it was to be an adequate security against military interference it must include the lower classes, in order to attain the requisite strength. By the employment of a property qualification it was for a time kept in the hands of the bourgeois, but when that qualification was removed in April, 1791, the lower classes predominated. Its strength at first was 48,000 in sixty battalions, each of six volunteer and one paid company, the latter recruited mainly from the disaffected regiments. The *Gardes Françaises* were co-opted in a body. The example of Paris in setting up a new municipality and a National Guard was followed all over France. A decree organizing such municipalities was passed on 14 December, 1789.

Meanwhile the Assembly had been closely occupied in the task which it regarded as its first duty, the production of a Constitution. On 6 July a Committee of thirty had been appointed to prepare a draft, but on the 14th its numbers had been reduced to eight. This Committee of eight is known as the First Constitutional Committee: it contained the élite of the men of '89¹ and was in favour of a monarchical Constitu-

¹ Mounier, Sieyès, Talleyrand, Lally-Tollendal, Clermont-Tonnère, le Chapelier, Bergasse and Champion de Cicé.

tion on English lines, in other words of a bicameral system and an absolute royal veto : it sat till 15 September, when, after the Assembly had rejected the more important of its recommendations, it resigned, and was replaced by a second Committee,¹ whose policy was much more destructive, and which was mainly responsible for the Constitution of 1791. The constitutional legislation of the Assembly during the last months of the year 1789, the whole of the year 1790, and the first nine months of 1791, has been too often lost sight of. It was not enforced in one great Constitutional Act in September, 1791, but imposed piece-meal as the Assembly came to a decision on various constitutional points. It is not therefore sufficient to examine in its place the Constitution of 1791, which was a supplementing and in some cases an amending Act, and it is necessary to follow the constitutional decrees of the Assembly with some care.

The first concern of the First Committee had been the compilation of a Declaration of The Rights of Man, on the lines of that which appeared in the American Constitution. This Declaration was discussed and voted between 20 and 26 August. Amongst the fundamental guarantees were liberty of person, of speech, of press ; equality before the tax-collector, inviolability of property ; provision for the sick and infirm and for abandoned children ; provision of work and education for all. But even before the declaration had been drafted by the Committee, the Assembly had taken up the vexed question of feudal rights and privileges. Advantage had been taken of the general disorder throughout the country to attack what remained of seigneurial power. *Châteaux* had been burned and records destroyed. These provincial *jacqueries* evoked the celebrated renunciation of feudal rights by the Assembly on 4 August. This dramatic renunciation without compensation of rights which had a financial value has been loudly applauded² and as loudly condemned ; in point of

¹ Sieyès, Talleyrand, le Chapelier, Thouret, Target, Desmeuniers, Rabaut-St. Étienne, Tronchet.

² Mirabeau, whose attitude on the *Séance* of 4 August was equivocal characterized it at one time as "an orgy" and at another declared that

fact it was largely modified in the cooler moments which followed the frenzied sitting of 4 August. Abolition *sans rachat* was restricted to those rights, probably very few in number, which involved personal servitude :¹ *droits réels* were declared redeemable and due as before until redeemed. It was not till much later that the majority of feudal rights were abolished : casual rights subsisted until 18 June, 1792 : on 25 August, 1792, all feudal property was declared free from feudal dues unless charters could be produced, and charters had largely perished in the *jacqueries* of 1789. On 17 July, 1793, even those rights which were guaranteed by charter were abolished. Clearly then the Constituent Assembly cannot claim the credit or discredit of the final destruction of feudalism, and the decree of 4 August, 1789, was little more than a deception.

By this time all government was practically in abeyance. The *ancien régime* had been levelled with the ground before the new regime was ready to take its place. Destruction is so much easier than construction ; and abolition rather than conversion had been the order of the day. It was under these conditions that a new and terrible tyrant easily ascended the throne, and the reign of the Paris mob began. While the Assembly was occupied with the Declaration of Rights, which might well have stood aside for more urgent matters at a time when men were rapidly losing all rights, it was also falling daily more and more under the heel of this tyrant, and a wise and moderate Constitution was becoming daily more and more impossible ; every delay was a concession to the forces of anarchy. When, on 28 August, the Assembly passed to the real work of the Constitution, and the vital questions arose of "two chambers" and the "royal veto" the pernicious effect of "public opinion" was displayed. The Committee had reported in favour of two chambers and an absolute veto, and if its recommendations had been accepted the Revolution might

the abolition of feudal rights was an expiation due to ten centuries of delirium. Barthou, "Mirabeau" (1913), p. 193.

¹ Pasquier ("Mémoires," 1893, I. 43, 44) even maintains that there was practically nothing left of feudal privilege in 1789.

have ended in 1789. But the Assembly threw over its own Committee, and on 10 September passed a decree in favour of single-chamber government.¹ On the question of the veto, which did not trespass on the dangerous ground of class feeling, there was more chance of a moderate decision. Mirabeau threw the great weight of his eloquence on to the side of the Committee in a speech which admirably exposed the dangers of unfettered democracy: he had previously declared that without a veto he would "sooner live in Constantinople". Lafayette, however, who was profoundly jealous of Mirabeau, proposed that the veto should be merely suspensive, and on 11 September his motion was carried by 673 votes to 325.

These debates and votes were of the utmost importance. They defined parties in the Assembly, and laid bare the numerical weakness of those who were courageous enough to avow their moderation. They made it finally certain that the Constitution would be one which would make orderly government impossible and which it would be difficult for the King to accept. They involved the disappearance from politics of the English Constitutionalists who now began to follow the *ancien régime* party into retirement. It was the failure of the men of 1789 that indirectly provoked the deplorable excesses of the Revolution. Their failure and its fearful consequences should be a warning to all politicians who sacrifice principle to power and accept the dictation of the proletariat. Above all the blame lies with Mirabeau who sinned against the light. He had the perspicacity to know what this abandonment of principle involved, and he also had the eloquence and the influence to direct public opinion. But he had not the character to do his duty, and quailed like the smaller men before the outcry of the agitators.

The King was now in an utterly defenceless position. His prerogative was disappearing before his eyes. The troops

¹ Only 89 deputies voted for the Committee's Report. The smallness of the minority was due in part to the fact that there were deputies on the right who did not realize that the only practical course was to work for a moderate Constitution. These men voted frivolously to make the Constitution unworkable.

had been withdrawn, the executive Government was paralysed, and the exchequer empty. In the early days of October the Declaration of the Rights of Man, together with an *Acte constitutionnel* embodying the Constitutional decrees already referred to was presented to him for his assent. This he gave only with reservations. The Assembly then demanded his outright assent, indicating that he had not the right to withhold his sanction to constitutional legislation (Decree of 5 October, 1789). Louis gave way. But his hesitation had been the signal for a further step on the part of the extremists, who had long been scheming to get the King to Paris where he would not be in a position to refuse their demands. A banquet given at Versailles by the Royal Body Guard to the *Régiment de Flandre* was exaggerated into a fresh plot against the Assembly. With tales of this feast as an orgy directed against the Revolution it was easy to work on the scum of the population of Paris, who were undoubtedly also suffering considerable hardships because the rioting had driven away the money-spending classes.

On 5 October, therefore, a rabble of women, accompanied by many of the other sex, marched to Versailles, invaded the Assembly, and demanded a reduction in the price of bread. The King received a joint deputation from the Assembly and the mob; but the mob remained at Versailles. Lafayette, who ought never to have allowed it to leave Paris, after much dawdling and delay, set out for Versailles, but on his arrival there simply went to bed, with the result that the mob broke into the palace during the night and nearly murdered the Queen. Lafayette's whole conduct during the crisis lays him open to the gravest suspicion. It looks as if he really wanted the King to be brought to Paris as a guarantee against attack on the capital by provincial reactionaries, and in order to enhance the importance of his own position. If so his treachery is one of the blackest acts in the whole history of the Revolution. He persuaded the King and Queen to show themselves on the balcony, and to allow him to pacify the mob with assurances that they would proceed to Paris. On the same afternoon, escorted by the rabble, the Royal Family started

for the Capital, and at sundown reached the long-deserted palace of Catherine de' Medici. They were not to leave it till the night in June, 1791, when they crept out of it in disguise. The inner history of the crisis of 5 and 6 October has never been unravelled. Both Orleans and Mirabeau were suspected of complicity, but it is not probable that either of them had anything to do with it. It is pretty plain, however, that the outbreak was not the spontaneous action of a starving multitud

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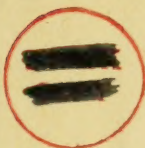
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